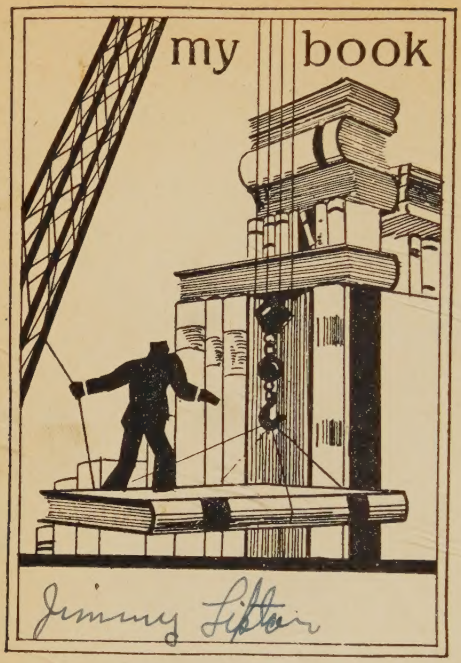
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE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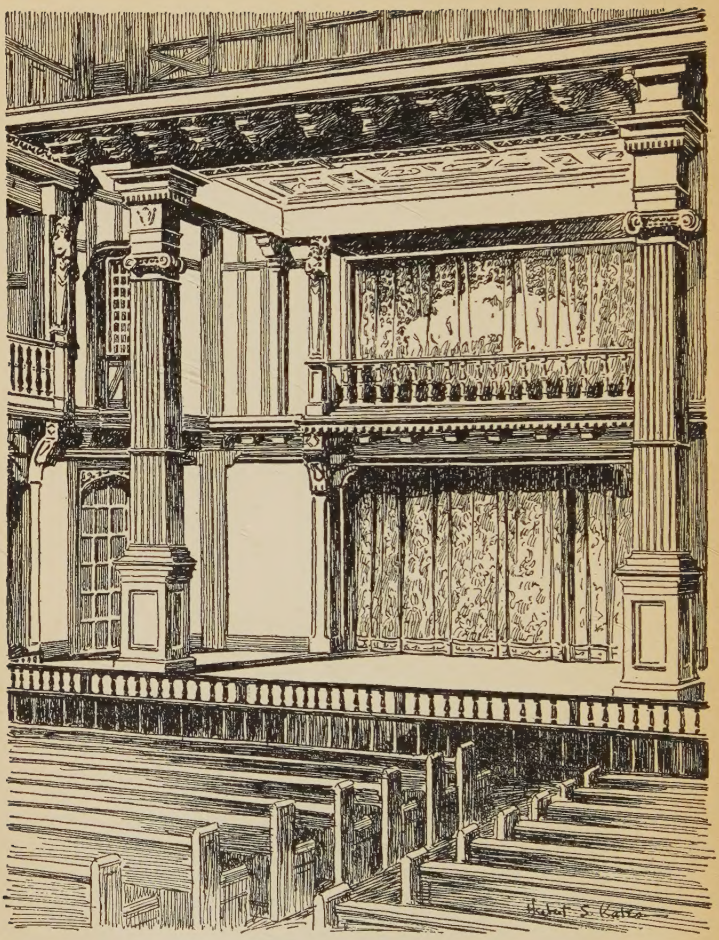

Shakespeare Theatre, Folger Library, Washington, D. C.
Replica of a typical theatre of Shakespeare's time.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

With the Famous Temple Notes

by

William Shakespeare

With Copious Notes and Comments by
Henry Norman Hudson, M.A.
Israel Gollancz, M.A.
C. H. Herford, Litt.D.
and One Hundred Other
Eminent Shakespearean Authorities

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A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

All the unsigned footnotes in this volume are by the writer of the article to which they are appended. The interpretation of the initials signed to the others is: I. G. = Israel Gollancz, M.A.; H. N. H.= Henry Norman Hudson, A.M.; C. H. H.= C. H. Herford, Litt.D.

PREFACE

By Israel Gollancz, M.A.

THE EDITIONS

Two Quarto editions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* appeared in the year 1600:—

(i.) *A Midsommer night's dreame. As it hath been sundry times publickely acted, by the Right honourable, the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants. Written by William Shakespeare. Imprinted at London, for Thomas Fisher, and are to be soulde at his shoppe, at the signe of the White Hart, in Fleetestreete.* 1600.

(ii.) An edition with the same title, bearing the name of "*Iames Roberts*" instead of "*Thomas Fisher.*"

These editions are styled respectively the First and Second Quartos; the Second was probably a pirated reprint of Fisher's, but the differences between them are unimportant, and though the First must be considered the authoritative text, both copies are remarkably accurate, when compared with other Quartos.

The First Folio version of the play was printed from the Second Quarto, with a few slight and unimportant changes, and with some careless errors.

THE DATE OF COMPOSITION

The only positive piece of external evidence for the date of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is its mention by Francis Meres in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598. Various attempts have been made to fix the occasion for which the play was originally written. Lord Southampton's marriage with

Elizabeth Vernon has been proposed by some, but this did not take place till 1598; others maintain that the occasion was the marriage of the Earl of Essex with Lady Frances Sidney, the widow of Sir Philip Sidney, in 1590; there is, however, absolutely no authority for the statement, and the probabilities are strongly opposed to the supposition.

The most valuable internal indication of the date of composition is perhaps to be found in Act v. i. 52–55:—

> *"The thrice three Muses mourning for the death*
> *Of Learning, late deceased in beggary.*
> This is some satire, keen and critical,
> Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony."

We have most likely in these lines a reference to the death of Robert Greene, "*utriusque Academiæ in Artibus Magister*," the novelist and dramatist, whose *Groatsworth of Wit* contained his well-known attack on "the onely Shake-scene in a country"; in this pamphlet Greene spoke as the very representative of "Learning," and sounded the alarm of the scholar-poets at the triumphs of the "unlearned" players in general, and of one "up-start crowe" in particular. Greene died in degraded beggary in the autumn of 1592. The phrase "*the thrice three Muses*" was in all likelihood suggested by Spenser's *Teares of the Muses* (published in 1591), in which the nine Muses severally bewail the neglect of the scholars,—one of many similar laments to be found in Elizabethan literature (*cp. e.g.* the lines at the end of the first sestiad of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*). The words "late deceas'd" would, according to this interpretation, fix the date of composition at about 1592–3.

On the other hand, it is maintained that Titania's description of the disastrous state of the weather (II. i. 88–117) points directly to the wretched summer of the year 1594; various contemporary accounts have come down to us of that terrible year, all of them recalling Shakespeare's words:—

"A colder time in world was never seene:
The skies do loure, the sun and moone wax dim;
Summer scarce known, but that the leaves are greene.
The winter's waste drives water ore the brim;
Upon the land great flotes of wood may swim;"
—Churchyard's *Charitie*, 1595.

[*cp.* Forman's *Diary* (1564–1602); Stowe's *Chronicle*, under the year 1594; Dr. King's *Lectures upon Jonas delivered at Yorke in the year of our Lorde* 1594.]

The general characteristics of the play lead to nothing very definite as far as its date is concerned; the rhyme-test is obviously no criterion, for the comedy is intentionally lyrical; but the blank-verse, with its paucity of double-endings and general regularity, the carefully elaborated plan and symmetrical arrangement of the plot, the comparative absence of real characterization, the many reminiscences of country life, the buoyancy of its tone, all these elements manifestly connect *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with the group of early "love plays,"—*Love's Labor's Lost*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *The Comedy of Errors*, and it may reasonably be placed between this group and the play to which they all seem to serve as preparatory efforts, the love-tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet*,—*i.e.* about the years 1593–1595. In all probability it passed through various revisions before its appearance as we have it in the First Quarto.

THE SOURCES

(i.) Shakespeare may well have evolved *A Midsummer Night's Dream* from Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*,[1] to which he is obviously indebted for many elements. The general frame-work of the play—viz., the marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta, must have been suggested by the *Tale;* but Shakespeare ingeniously opens the *Dream* before the marriage, so that this event may round off the whole play; Chaucer introduces us to the pair at their home-coming

1 Shakespeare's debt to Plutarch's *Life of Theseus* amounts to very little,—a few names and allusions.

after the marriage. In the *Tale* we have Palamon and Arcite rivals for the hand of Emelië; in obedience to the symmetrical plan of Shakespeare's early plots, these give place to two pairs of lovers, with their more complex story of crossed love; Emelië in fact resolves herself into Helena and Hermia. They are indeed "two lovely berries moulded on one stem."

The great gods of Olympus, who busy themselves so actively with the destinies of the lovers in the *Tale*, are represented in the *Dream* by their medieval representatives, by Oberon, Titania, and their ministering sprites.

In the *Tale*, as in the *Dream*, we have the same allusions to the rites of May, and the same "musical confusion of hounds and echo in conjunction." Shakespeare has, however, wisely dispensed with the cumbersome machinery of the *Tale*—cumbersome from the theatrical point of view—viz., the dungeons, tournaments, etc. *The Two Noble Kinsmen* should be read in order to understand how weak a drama results from the actual dramatization of Chaucer's story of Palamon and Arcite.[1]

The secret of the transformation of *The Knight's Tale* into *A Midsummer Night's Dream* may perhaps be partially understood, if we consider the task that Shakespeare seems to have set himself,—the task of satisfying all the requirements of a "Court drama" without departing from his own ideas of Romantic Comedy. The essential elements of such a play as Lyly's *Endymion*,—the spectacular machinery, the mythological agencies, the love-story, the comical interlude, the complimentary allusions to the Queen, direct or allegorical,—all these find a place in Shakespeare's *Dream*.

(ii.) Popular tradition, derived from Teutonic and Celtic paganism, together with quasi-classical and romantic lore, are the main sources of Shakespeare's fairy mythol-

[1] I cannot bring myself to believe that there is a line of Shakespeare's in this unequal performance; it is specially interesting to note that the authors of the *Two Noble Kinsmen* must have known that the *Dream* represented Shakespeare's version of the *Tale*.

ogy.[1] Oberon, the fairy king, found a place in English dramatic literature [2] before Shakespeare re-created him; he may be traced back to the Charlemagne romance of *Huon of Bordeaux*, translated from the French by Lord Berners about 1534 (*cp. Early English Text Society, Extra Series*, ed. S. Lee, Nos. 40, 41, 43, 50). "Oberon," in reality identical with the famous dwarf "Alberich" of the *Nibelungen Lied*, dwells with all his fairy subjects in a forest on the way to Babylon, and the splendor of his equipment has a truly oriental coloring; similarly Shakespeare associates his "fairy-land" with the East—"the farthest steppe of India."

"Titania" (taken from Ovid, Meta. IV, 346, where it is applied to Diana), illustrates the belief current at the time that the fairies were identical with the classical nymphs, and that Diana was their queen.[3] Titania's more popular title was "Queen Mab."

In Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale* the Fairy-King and Fairy-Queen are styled *Pluto* and *Proserpina;* possibly Shakespeare was indebted to Chaucer's *Tale* for the quarrel between Oberon and Titania, and for the Fairy-King's interest in a pair of mortals:—

> "Pluto that is King of Faerië,
> And many a lady in his companië
> Following his wife, the Queen Proserpina . . .
> Dame, quod this Pluto, be no longer wroth,
> I am king, it sit me not to lië.
> And I, quoth she, am Queen of Faërië,
> Let us no morë wordës of it make."

[1] N.B. "Fairy" properly signifies merely "enchantment," or the state of being like a fay; *fée,* with its various cognates in other Romance languages is derived from a low Latin *fata,* "a goddess of destiny," really a plural of *fatum,* treated as a feminine singular. The application of this term to the "elves" of Teutonic mythology is in itself instructive.

[2] In Greene's *James IV* where he figures as "Oboram, King of the Fayeries"; (*cp. The Faerie Queene,* Bk. ii., Cant. i., Sts. 6, 75).

[3] King James I in his *Demonologie* points out that Diana was "amongst us called the Phairee."

(It should be borne in mind that Spenser's *Faerie Queene* was published in 1590.)

The characteristics of "Puck," Oberon's jester ("thou lob of spirits, *i.e.* clown," II. 1–16), may all have been derived from popular tradition; the name was probably of Celtic origin, a generic term for "sprite or goblin," but it is found in English before the Conquest, and very early in Scandinavian and other dialects. The mischief-loving sprite was generally known as "Robin Goodfellow" in English, and "Knecht Ruprecht" in German. (On the Fairy-lore, *cp.* Halliwell's *Illustrations of the Fairy Mythology of Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare Society Publication, 1845, where among other illustrative texts *The Mad Pranks and Merry Jests of Robin Goodfellow* (printed 1628) will be found *in extenso;* also, Keightley's *Fairy Mythology; cp.* Jonson's Mask of *Oberon*, Drayton's *Nymphidia*, Milton's *L'Allegro*, 100–114).

(iii.) It is significant that in Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale*, to which tale allusion has already been made, occur the following lines:—

> O noble Ovide, soth sayest thou, God wot,
> What sleight is it if love be long and hote,
> That he will find it out in some manere?
> By Pyramus and Thisbe may men lere;
> Though they were kept ful long and strict over all,
> They ben accorded, rowning through a wall, etc.[1]

Perhaps these lines suggested to Shakespeare the subject of his burlesque interlude, introduced into this play much in the same way as the "Nine Worthies" in *Love's Labor's Lost*. Various poems, ballads, and perhaps mumming plays on the subject of Pyramus and Thisbe were probably known to Shakespeare, though his immediate source seems to have been Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where the story is told (iv. 55–166).

A commonplace-book of the beginning of the seven-

[1] Chaucer's *Legend of Thisbe of Babylon* was certainly read by Shakespeare, though its influence cannot be detected in the play.

teenth century belonging to the British Museum (Additional MSS. 15227) contains a short play entitled "*Tragœdia miserrima Pyrami et Thisbes Fata enuncians* [*Historia ex Publio Ovidio deprompta*] *Authore N.R.*" A few lines from these brief "tedious" scenes will serve to show how easily the subject lends itself to burlesque:—

> "What shall I doe? I know not what to doe.
> Where shall I runne, oh runne? I cannot goe.
> Where shall I goe, oh goe? I cannot stirre."

Among Clement Robinson's *Handful of Pleasant Delights* (1584) there is *A New Sonet of Pyramus and Thisbe*, which occasionally reminds one of Shakespeare's parody.

["*Narcissus, A Twelfe Night Merriment played by Youths of the Parish at the College of S. John the Baptist in Oxford, A.D.* 1602 (*ed. Margaret Lee; David Nutt,* 1893) is a similar burlesque of an Ovidian story.]

(iv.) "Oberon's Vision"—the pivot of the play—contains without doubt a complimentary allusion to the Queen. Various explanations have been advanced of the whole passage (II. i. 148–168). In 1843 the Rev. N. J. Halpin published his *Oberon's Vision in the Midsummer-Night's Dream, illustrated by a comparison with Lylie's Endymion* —the most ingenious unraveling of this allegorical passage, which is said to refer to the Queen's visit to Kenilworth Castle in July, 1575; to the festivities on that occasion; to the ambitious attempts of Leicester ("Cupid all arm'd," Lyly's *Endymion*) to win Elizabeth ("the cold moon," Lyly's *Cynthia*); to his wavering passion for the Countess of Sheffield ("the earth," Lyly's *Tellus*); and finally to his intrigue with Lettice, Countess of Essex ("a little western flower," Lyly's *Floscula*).

TIME OF ACTION

The action of the play covers three days, or rather one long night preceded and followed by a day, although

Theseus in his opening words tells Hippolyta "Four happy days" are to elapse before their nuptial hour. The eventful night of the second day occupies the greater part of the play—viz., Acts II., III., and IV. Sc. 1 (ll. 1–143). The following morning is "the morn of May"; "the Dream" is really "a May-Night's Dream," but "Midsummer Eve"—"St. John's Night," with its pagan Balefires —was especially associated with fairy superstitions and fantastic riotings, and the title suggests little more than "a very Midsummer madness." It is not absolutely necessary, as some scholars maintain, to regard the play as actually written for performance "on Midsummer-day at Night," though such plays were occasionally composed (*e.g.* Ben Jonson's Fairy Masque, *The Satyr*, which evidently owes much to Shakespeare).

The idea of a "dream-drama" was perhaps suggested by Lyly's Prologue to his *Woman in the Moon*, written some ten years before Shakespeare's play:—

> "Remember all is but a poet's dream,
> The first he had in Phœbus' holy bower,
> But not the last, unless the first displease."

But in employing the *Dream* as a piece of poetical machinery Shakespeare links himself to his medieval predecessors, whose conventional allegories knew no other medium than that made familiar to them by their favorite *Romaunt*,—a device derived by Lorris from the quaint dream-book to which Chaucer often refers, *Scipionis Somnium*, by "an author hight Macrobes."

"God turne us every dream to good!"

INTRODUCTION

By Henry Norman Hudson, M.A.

A Midsummer-Night's Dream was entered in the books of the Stationers' Company, by Thomas Fisher, October 8, 1600. In the course of that year was published a quarto pamphlet of thirty-two leaves, with a title-page reading as follows: "A Midsummer-Night's Dream: As it hath been sundry times publicly acted by the Right honourable, the Lord Chamberlain his servants. Written by William Shakespeare. Imprinted at London for Thomas Fisher, and are to be sold at his shop, at the Sign of the White Hart, Fleetestreet: 1600." Another edition came out the same year, "printed by James Roberts." The play was not printed again till in the folio of 1623, where it stands the eighth in the list of comedies.

Fisher was a publisher, but not a printer; Roberts was both; and the entering of the play to the former seems to argue that he had the copy-right, and that the edition of the latter was unauthorized. Yet, from the agreement of this and the folio in certain misprints, we are brought to infer that Heminge and Condell must have taken Roberts' text in making up their copy for the press. In all three of the copies, however, the printing is remarkably clear and accurate for the time, leaving little room for controversy as to the true reading: probably none of the Poet's works has reached us in a more perfect state. As an instance of the general correctness, Knight aptly refers to the Prologue of the Interlude, which is carefully mispointed in the original copies; thus showing that either the proof was corrected by the Author, or the printing was from a very clear manuscript. The main difference

between the quartos and the folio is, that the latter distinguishes the acts: the scenes are not marked in either.

The play is mentioned by Meres in his *Palladis Tamia;* which ascertains that it was made before 1598: and a curious piece of internal evidence renders it highly probable that the writing was after 1594. One of the finest passages in the play is in Act ii. sc. 1, where Titania describes the confusion of the seasons, and the evils thence resulting to man and beast; and the description tallies so well with the strange misbehavior of the weather in 1594, as to leave scarce any room for doubt as to the allusion. The disorderly conduct of the elements that year is thus recorded in Strype's *Annals* from a discourse at York by Dr. King: "Remember that the spring was very unkind, by means of the abundance of rain that fell. Our July hath been like to a February; our June even as an April: so that the air must needs be infected." Again, after recounting other signs of the divine wrath, the preacher adds, —"And see, whether the Lord doth not threaten us much more, by sending such unseasonable weather, and storms of rain among us: which if we will observe, and compare it with what is past, we may say that the course of nature is very much inverted. Our years are turned upside down: our summers are no summers; our harvests are no harvests; our seed-times are no seed-times. For a great space of time scant any day hath been seen that it hath not rained." To the same effect Mr. Halliwell has produced an extract from the *Diary* of Dr. Simon Forman, showing how the heavy rains

> "Have every pelting river made so proud,
> That they have overborne their continents."

So that we can hardly choose but conclude that the play, or at least the passage in question, must have been written after the summer of 1594, when the Poet had passed his thirtieth year. And surely, the truth of the allusion being granted, all must admit that passing events and matters

of fact were never turned to better account in the service of poetry.

Another passage has been often quoted and discussed as bearing upon the matter in hand. We confess ourselves quite unable to make any thing out of it for that purpose. In Act v. sc. 1, when the parties interested are considering what entertainment shall be made choice of to grace the forthcoming nuptials, the Master of the Revels produces "a brief how many sports are ripe," the third item of which is—

> "The thrice three Muses mourning for the death
> Of learning, late deceas'd in beggary."

Some have regarded this as pointing to the death of Spenser, which occurred in 1599; others, as referring to Spenser's *Tears of the Muses*, which appeared in 1591. The former, of course, could not be the case but upon the supposal that the lines were written in at a revisal, which would rule them out of the question as to when the play was first made. The latter might indeed pass, but for what Theseus says of the performance there designated.

> "That is some satire, keen and critical,
> Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony:"

a description to which *The Tears of the Muses* nowise corresponds. Mr. Knight suggests that the passage may refer to Harvey's "keen and critical," but ungenerous attack upon Greene, soon after the death of the latter in 1592: which suggestion, however, he does not himself consider of much value, wherein we cordially agree with him.

Upon the whole, therefore, the best conclusion we can form is, that the play was written somewhere between 1594 and 1598. Yet we have to concur with Mr. Verplanck, that there are some passages which relish strongly of an earlier period; while again there are others that with the prevailing sweetness of the whole have such an intertwisting of nerve and vigor, and such an energetic compactness of thought and imagery, mingled occasionally with the

deeper tonings of "years that bring the philosophic mind," as to argue that they were wrought into the structure of the play not long before it came from the press. The part of the Athenian lovers certainly has much that would scarce do credit even to such a boyhood as Shakespeare's must have been. On the other hand, there is a large philosophy in Theseus' discourse of "the lunatic, the lover, and the poet," a noble sagacity in his reasons for preferring the "tedious brief scene of young Pyramus and his love Thisbe," and a bracing freshness and inspiriting hilarity in the short dialogue of the chase, such as the Poet's best years need not blush to have been the father of. Perhaps, however, what seem the defects of the former, the far-fetched conceits and artificial elegances, were wisely designed, in order to invest the part with such an air of dreaminess and unreality as would better sort with the scope and spirit of the piece, and preclude a disproportionate resentment of some naughty acts into which those love-bewildered frailties are betrayed. So that we cannot quite go along with the judicious critic last mentioned, in thinking the part in question to have been the remains of a juvenile effort, with which, after a long interval, the heroic personages and some of the fairy scenes were amalgamated or interwoven.

It is hardly to be supposed that this play could have been very successful on the boards. Though unsurpassed and unsurpassable in its kind, such a preponderance of the poetical over the dramatic could scarce have been greatly relished by the same audiences and in the same places where those performances so intensely crowded with dramatic life made their Author "the applause, delight, the wonder of our stage." Notwithstanding, as evidence that the play enjoyed a good share of fame, we may quote a passage from *Sir Gregory Nonsense*, by Taylor the Water-poet in 1622: "I say it is applausefully written, and commended to posterity, in the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*,—If we offend, it is with our good will: We come with no intent but to offend, and show our simple skill." And a manuscript

has been discovered in the Library at Lambeth Palace, showing that the play was represented, September 27, 1631, at the house of John Williams, Bishop of Lincoln; the same great but by no means faultless man who was so harshly treated by Laud, and gave the King such crooked counsel in the case of Strafford, and spent his last years in mute sorrow at the death of his royal master, and had his life written by the wise, witty, good Bishop Hacket.

Some hints for the part of Theseus and Hippolyta appear to have been taken from *The Knightes Tale* of Chaucer. Chaucer's *Legend of Thisbe of Babilon*, and Golding's translation of the same story from Ovid, probably furnished the matter for the Interlude. So much as relates to Bottom and his fellows evidently came fresh from nature as she had passed under the Poet's eye. The linking of these clowns in with the ancient tragic tale of Pyramus and Thisbe, so as to draw the latter within the region of modern farce, thus travestying the classic into the grotesque, is not less original than droll. How far it may have expressed the Poet's judgment touching the theatrical doings of his time, perhaps were a question more curious than profitable. The names of Oberon, Titania, and Robin Goodfellow, were made familiar by the surviving relics of Gothic and Druidical mythology; as were also many particulars in their habits, mode of life, and influence in human affairs. Hints and allusions, scattered through many preceding writers, might be produced, showing that the old superstition had been grafted into the body of Christianity, where it had shaped itself into a regular system so as to mingle in the lore of the nursery, and hold an influential place in the popular belief. Some features, or rather some reports of this ancient Fairydom are thus translated into poetry by Chaucer in *The Wif of Bathes Tale:*

> "In olde dayes of the King Artour,
> Of which that Bretons speken gret honour,
> All was this lond fulfilled of faerie;
> The Elf-quene, with hire joly compagnie,

Danced ful oft in many a grene mede.
This was the old opinion as I rede;
I speke of many hundred yeres ago;
But now can no man see non elves mo,
For now the grete charitee and prayeres
Of limitoures and other holy freres,
That serchen every land and every streme
As thikke as motes in the sonne-beme,
This maketh that ther ben no faeries:
For ther as wont to walken was an elf,
Ther walketh now the limitour himself."

But, though Chaucer and others had spoken about the fairy nation, it was for Shakespeare to let them speak for themselves: until he clothed their substances in apt forms, their thoughts in fitting words, they but floated unseen and unheard in the mental atmosphere of his father-land. But for him, we might indeed have heard of them, but not have known them. So that Mr. Hallam is quite right in regarding *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* as "altogether original in one of the most beautiful conceptions that ever visited the mind of a poet—the fairy machinery. A few before him," he adds, "had dealt, in a vulgar and clumsy manner, with popular superstitions; but the sportive, beneficent, invisible population of air and earth, long since established in the creed of childhood, and of those simple as children, had never for a moment been blended with 'human mortals,' among the personages of the drama." How much Shakespeare did as the friend and savior of those sweet airy frolickers of the past, from the relentless mowings of Time, has been charmingly set forth by a poet of our own day. We allude to Thomas Hood's delightful poem, *The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies.*

Coleridge says he is "convinced that Shakespeare availed himself of the title of this play in his own mind, and worked upon it as a dream throughout." And elsewhere he remarks that "the whole of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is one continued specimen of the dramatized lyrical." These observations, both of which spring out of one and the same idea, undoubtedly hit the true center and

life of the performance; and on no other ground can its merits be rightly estimated. This it is that explains and justifies the distinctive features of the work, such as the constant subordination of the dramatic elements, and the free playing of the action unchecked by the laws and conditions of outward fact and reality. A sort of lawlessness is indeed the very law of the piece: the actual order of things giving place to the spontaneous issues and capricious turnings of the mind; the lofty and the low, the beautiful and the grotesque, the worlds of fancy and of fact, all the strange diversities that enter into "such stuff as dreams are made of," every where running and frisking together, and interchanging their functions and properties: so that the whole seems confused, flitting, shadowy, and indistinct, as fading away in the remoteness and fascination of moonlight. The very scene is laid in a sort of dream-land, called Athens indeed, but only because Athens was the greatest beehive of beautiful visions then known; or rather, it lies in an ideal forest near an ideal Athens,—a forest peopled with sportive elves, and sprites, and fairies, feeding on moonlight, and music, and fragrance: a place where nature herself is supernatural; where every thing is idealized, even to the sunbeams and the soil; where the vegetation proceeds by enchantment; and where there is magic in the germination of the seed and secretion of the sap.

Great strength of passion or of volition would obviously be out of place in such a performance: it has room but for love, and beauty, and delight,—for whatsoever is most poetical in nature and fancy; and therefore for none but such tranquil stirrings of thought and feeling as may flow out in musical expression: any tuggings of mind or heart, that should ruffle and discompose the smoothnesses of lyrical division, would be quite out of keeping with a dream, especially a midsummer-night's dream, and would be very apt to turn it into something else. The characters, therefore, are appropriately drawn with light, delicate, vanishing touches; some of them being dreamy and sentimental, some

gay and frolicsome, and others replete with amusing absurdities, while all are alike dipped in fancy or sprinkled with humor. And for the same reason the tender distresses of unrequited or forsaken love here touch not the moral sense at all, but only at most our human sympathies; for love is represented as but the effect of some visual enchantment, which the king of fairies can undo or suspend, reverse or inspire, at pleasure. The lovers all seem creatures of another mould than ourselves, with barely enough of the fragrance of humanity about them to interest our human feelings, and whose deepest sorrow wears upon its face a flush and play of inward happiness. Even the heroic personages are fitly represented with unheroic aspect: we see them but in their unbendings, when they have doffed their martial robes aside, to lead the train of day-dreamers, and have a nuptial jubilee. In their case great care and art were required, to make the play what it has been censured for being,—that is, to keep the dramatic sufficiently under, and lest the law of a part should override the law of the whole. So, likewise, in the transformation of Bottom and the dotage of Titania, all the resources of fancy were needed, to prevent the unpoetical from getting the upper hand, and thus swamping the genius of the piece. As it is, what words can fitly express the effect with which the extremes of the grotesque and the beautiful are here brought together; and how, in their meeting, each passes into the other without leaving to be itself? What an inward quiet laughing springs up and lubricates the fancy at Bottom's droll confusion of his two natures, when he talks, now as an ass, now as a man, and anon as a mixture of both, his thoughts running at the same time upon honey-bags and thistles, the charms of music and of good dry oats! Who but another nature could have so interfused the lyrical spirit, not only with, but into and through a series or cluster of the most irregular and fantastical drolleries? But indeed this embracing and kissing of the most ludicrous and the most poetical, the enchantment under which they meet, and the airy, dream-like grace that

hovers over their union, are altogether inimitable and indescribable. In this unparalleled wedlock the very diversity of the elements seems to link them the closer, while this linking in turn heightens that diversity; Titania being thereby drawn on to finer issues of soul, and Bottom to larger expressions of stomach. The union is so very improbable as to seem quite natural: we cannot conceive how any thing but a dream could possibly have married things so contrary; and that they could not have come together save in a dream, is a sort of proof that they were dreamed together.

And so, thoughout, the execution is in strict accordance with the plan: the play, from beginning to end, is a perfect festival of whatsoever dainties and delicacies poetry may command,—a continued revelry and jollification of soul, where the understanding is put asleep that fancy may run riot, and wanton in unrestrained carousal. The bringing together of four parts so dissimilar as those of the Duke and his warrior Bride, of the Athenian ladies and their lovers, of the amateur players and their woodland rehearsal, and of the fairy bickerings and overreaching; and the carrying of them severally to a point where they all meet and blend in lyrical respondence;—all this is done in the same freedom from the rules that govern the drama of character and life. Each group of persons is made to parody itself into concert with the others, while the frequent intershootings of fairy influence lift the whole into the softest regions of fancy. At last the Interlude comes in as an amusing burlesque on all that has gone before, as in our troubled dreams we sometimes end with a dream that we have been dreaming, and our perturbations sink to rest in the sweet assurance that they were but the phantoms and unrealities of a busy sleep. Ulrici, —whose criticisms generally appear too something, perhaps too profound, to be of much use,—rightly considers this reciprocal parody the basis and center where the several parts coalesce and round themselves into an organic whole. Yet, as if this vital coherence of all the parts were

not enough, the several threads are collected and bound together; the nuptial doings at the close winding up whatsoever might else seem scattered and uncomposed, thus setting a formal knot upon an unity that was real before.

Partly for the reasons already stated, and partly for others that we scarce know how to state, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is a most effectual poser to criticism. Besides that its very essence is irregularity, so that it cannot be fairly brought to the test of rules, the play forms a complete class by itself: literature has nothing else like it; nothing therefore with which it may be compared and its merits adjusted. For the Poet has here exercised powers apparently differing even in kind, not only from those of any other writer, but from those shown in any other of his own writings: elsewhere, if his characters be penetrated with the ideal, their whereabout lies in the actual, and the work may in some measure be judged by that life which it claims to represent: here the whereabout is as ideal as the characters; all is in the land of dreams,—a place for dreamers, not for critics. The whole thing, moreover, swarms with enchantment: all the sweet witchery of Shakespeare's sweet genius is concentrated into it, yet disposed with so subtle and cunning a hand, that we can as little grasp it as get away from it: its charms, like those of a summer evening, are such as we may see and feel, but cannot locate or define; cannot say they are here, or they are there: the moment we yield ourselves up to them, they seem to be every where; the moment we go to master them, they seem to be nowhere.

Though, as already remarked, the characterization be here quite secondary and subordinate, yet the play probably has as much of character as is compatible with so much of poetry. Theseus has been well described as a classic personage drawn with romantic features and expression. The name is Greek; but the nature and spirit are essentially Gothic. Nor does the abundance of classic allusion and imagery in the story call for any qualification here, because whatsoever is taken is thoroughly steeped

in the efficacy of the taker. This species of anachronism, common to all modern writers before and during the age of Shakespeare, seems to have risen in part from a comparative dearth of classical learning, which left men to contemplate the heroes of antiquity under the forms into which their own minds and manners were cast. Thus all their delineations became informed with the genius of romance: the condensed grace of ancient character gave way to the enlargement of chivalrous magnanimity and honor, with its "high-erected thoughts seated in the heart of courtesy." Such appears to have been the no less beautiful than natural result of the "small Latin and less Greek," so often smiled and sometimes barked at, by those more skilled in the ancient languages than in the mother-tongue of nature.

Puck is apt to remind one of Ariel, though they have little in common, save that both are supernatural, and therefore live no longer in the faith of reason. Puck is no such sweet-mannered, tender-hearted, music-breathing spirit, there are no such delicate interweavings of a sensitive moral soul in his nature, he has no such soft touches of compassion and pious awe of goodness, as link the dainty Ariel in so sweetly with our best sympathies. Though Goodfellow by name, his powers and aptitudes for mischief are quite unchecked by any gentle relentings of fellow-feeling: in whatsoever distresses he finds or occasions he sees much to laugh at, nothing to pity: to tease and vex poor human sufferers, and then to think "what fools these mortals be," is pure fun to him; and if he do not cause pain, it is that the laws of Fairydom forbid him, not that he wishes it uncaused. Yet, notwithstanding his mad pranks, we cannot choose but love him, and let our fancy frolic with him, his sense of the ludicrous is so exquisite, he is so fond of sport, and so quaint and merry in his mischief, while at the same time such is the strange web of his nature as to keep him morally innocent. It would seem that some of the tricks once ascribed to him were afterwards transferred to witchcraft. Well do we remem-

ber a black spot in the bottom of the old churn over which we have toiled away many an autumnal evening. A red-hot horse-shoe had been thrown in to disbewitch the cream, and had left its mark there. Report told how a certain old woman of the neighborhood was fretting and groaning the next morning with a terrible burn. Of course she was burnt out of the churn, and, she away, the butter soon came.

But of all the characters in this play, Bottom descends by far the most into the realities of common experience, and is therefore much the most accessible to the grasp of prosaic and critical fingers. It has been thought the Poet meant him as a satire on the envies and jealousies of the green-room, as they had fallen under his keen yet kindly eye. Surely the qualities uppermost in Bottom had forced themselves on his notice long before he entered the green-room. It is indeed curious to observe the solicitude of this Protean actor, and critic, and connoisseur, that all the parts of the forthcoming play may have the benefit of his execution; how great is his concern lest, if he be tied to one, the others may be "overdone or come tardy off"; and how he would fain engross them all to himself, to the end of course that all may succeed to the honor of the stage and the pleasure of the spectators. But Bottom's metamorphosis is the most potent drawer-out of his genius. The sense of his new head-dress stirs up all the manhood within him, and lifts his character into ludicrous greatness at once. Hitherto the seeming a man has made him content to be little better than an ass; but no sooner does he seem an ass than he tries his best to be a man; and all his efforts that way only go to approve the perfect fitness of his present seeming to his former being.

Schlegel ingeniously remarks, that "the droll wonder of Bottom's metamorphosis is merely the translation of a metaphor in its literal sense." The turning a figure of speech thus into visible form is a thing only to be thought of or imagined; so that probably no attempt to paint or represent it to the senses can ever succeed. We can bear,

we often have to bear, that a man should seem an ass to the mind's eye; but not that he should seem so to the eye of the body. A child, for example, takes great pleasure in fancying the stick he rides to be a horse, when he would be frightened out of his wits were the stick to quicken and expand into an actual horse. In like manner, we often delight in indulging fancies and giving names, when we should be shocked, were our fancies to harden into facts: we enjoy visions in our sleep, that would only disgust or terrify us, should we wake up and find them solidified into things. The effect of Bottom's transformation can scarce be much otherwise, if brought upon the stage. Delightful to think, it is intolerable to look upon: exquisitely true in idea, it has no truth, or even verisimilitude, when reduced to fact; so that, however gladly imagination receives it, sense and understanding revolt at it.

COMMENTS

By Shakespearean Scholars

THE DRAMATIC ELEMENTS

This play is the shortest of the collection—the least marked in delineations of personal character—the least charged with moral significance—the most musical or lyrical. It is picturesque, imaginative, playful, and droll. Still it is a drama, and not a poem—it was written for representation, and unhesitatingly the writer allowed himself all the advantages which good representation placed at his command, without consideration how readers might fare who should lack the aid and comment of living personification. Yet, physically speaking, a large portion of the characters are more difficult of adequate impersonation than those of any other play. Before imitation of sentiment or passion is thought of, we are met at the outset with the impossibility of donning the costume. The words set down belie the claim of any actor of mortal mould to utter them; the delicate, ethereal, diminutive, yet energetic fairies, move and speak in measures and proportions that are out of all harmony with any conceivable subject histrionic. Nevertheless, with these difficulties Shakespeare coped, and not ignoring but admitting and improving them, making them the very theme and groundwork of his fanciful contrasts and ludicrous incongruities, he wrote a drama and not a poem, and, I have no doubt, brought it forth with an effect corresponding to the "right happy and copious industry" he had thereon bestowed.—Lloyd, *Critical Essays.*

Like the sources—pretty enough surely—of its poetic inspiration, so the dramatic elements of *A Midsummer*

Night's Dream are more than usually manifold. No less than four streams of story flow through these glades of summer and fairyland, sometimes uniting, sometimes apart, till they mingle forever as they pour their tribute into the great ocean of truth and beauty. We have the story of the nuptials of Theseus and Hippolyta. This may be called the main stream—though the point is a doubtful one; then there is the interlude of Pyramus and Thisbe, with all that leads up to its performance; next, the fortunes of the two pairs of lovers, the stream of true love that never yet ran smooth; and, touching these here and there, the troubled currents of the quarrel between the Fairy King and Queen; and we may add that the three latter never lose sight of the first.

Otherwise we may find the poet's main motive in the fairy element, and the influence it is made to exert on two extremes of human society; these extremes, moreover, are introduced to us separately in Act i., and at length, in Act v., when the fairy element has been withdrawn, they are admirably united by the "tragical mirth" of Pyramus and Thisbe.—Luel, *Handbook to Shakespeare's Works.*

THE THEME OF THE PLAY

The theme which the action carries out in the spirit of the fantastico-comic view of life is the illusion into which men are thrown by *love*, the poetry of life, which here holds captive the senses of the dramatic personages as if by some irresistible charm. It is the magic power of love which has caused the bloody feud between Theseus and the Amazon queen to resolve itself into a gay wedding feast. Titania has fallen in love with an Indian boy, whom Oberon, in a fit of jealousy, demands her to give up, so that he may make the boy one of his huntsmen: and this again gives rise to the bantering play of the elves among one another. Egeus, the father of Hermia, has taken a blind preference for Demetrius, which is his only reason for refusing his daughter's hand to Lysander, and he wishes to

compel her against her will to marry Demetrius. The latter, who was originally devoted to the faithful Helena, suddenly becomes passionately enamoured of Hermia, who has an aversion to him. Lastly, the play of the mechanics, in which they themselves are wholly engrossed, turns upon the tragic loves of Pyramus and Thisbe; moreover Bottom, the leader of the company, is unawares thrown into an amorous relation with Titania. The complication among the different pairs of lovers (with the exception of Theseus and Hippolyta) threatens to become serious:—Oberon's and Titania's quarrel has already occasioned much mischief, and, as Titania herself expressly says, may even lead to more;—Hermia, in case of her abiding by her refusal, is threatened with death or doomed to pass her life in a nunnery;—Helena is in despair about the infidelity of Demetrius, and the latter about Hermia's cruelty. But the purport of the piece is not to give a comic representation of love—this is not the actual theme of the poem. On the contrary, the action exhibits the serious side of the passion of love only so as to parody this seriousness by representing love itself as a mere plaything, a mere illusion; in short, the action in reality parodies itself. This is why love here does not appear as an inward fascination of the heart, proceeding from the imagination or from the force of the involuntarily changing disposition of the lovers, but that it, at the same time, appears subject to the outward magic interference of higher beings, who carry on their bantering play with them. Oberon's magic herbs cause Lysander and Demetrius suddenly to become madly in love with Helena, and Titania to dote upon Bottom; but the spell is as rapidly dissolved and the right relation restored. The acting mechanics are therefore not without reason woven into the adventures of the magic forest. For, on the one hand, their burlesque comedy is intended to remind us that the seriousness of these adventures is, after all, not meant to be so very serious, and, on the other hand, the representation of Pyramus and Thisbe draws the tragic pathos of love down to the level of the ludicrous,

and thereby, at the same time, parodies the apparently tragic significance of love which is depicted in the piece itself. Hence A. Schöll very justly remarks, that, "When Demetrius and Lysander make fun of the candor with which these true-hearted *dilettanti* cast aside their masks during their performance, we cannot avoid recalling to mind that they themselves had shortly before, in the wood, no less quickly fallen out of their own parts. When these gentlemen consider Pyramus a bad lover, they forget that they had previously been no better themselves; they had then declaimed about love as unreasonably as here Pyramus and Thisbe. Like the latter, they were separated from their happiness by a wall which was no wall but a delusion, they drew daggers which were as harmless as those of Pyramus, and were, in spite of all their efforts, no better than the mechanics, that is to say, they were the means of making others laugh, the elves and ourselves. Nay, Puck makes the maddest game of these good citizens, for Bottom is more comfortable in the enchanted wood than they. The merry Puck has, indeed, by a mad prank had his laugh over the awkward workmen and the lovely fairy queen, but in deceiving the foolish mortals has at the same time deceived himself. For although he, the elf, has driven Lysander and Demetrius and the terrified mechanics about the wood, the elves have, in turn, been unceremoniously sent hither and thither to do the errands of Bottom, the ruling favorite of Titania; Bottom had wit enough to chaff the small Masters Cobweb, Peas-blossom and Mustard-seed, as much as Puck had chaffed him and his fellows. Thus no party can accuse the other of anything, and in the end we do not know whether the mortals have been dreaming of elves, the elves of mortals, or we ourselves of both." In fact, the whole play is a bantering game, in which all parties are quizzed in turn, and which, at the same time, makes game of the audience as well.—Ulrici, *Shakspeare's Dramatic Art.*

Upon the most superficial reading we perceive that the

actions in the Midsummer Night's Dream, still more than the characters themselves, are treated quite differently to those in other plays of Shakespeare. The presence of an underlying motive—the great art and true magic wand of the poet—has here been completely disregarded. Instead of reasonable inducements, instead of natural impulses arising from character and circumstance, caprice is master here. We meet with a double pair, who are entangled in strange mistakes, the motives to which we, however, seek for in vain in the nature of the actors themselves. Demetrius, like Proteus in the Two Gentlemen of Verona, has left a bride, and, like Proteus, woos the bride of his friend Lysander. This Lysander has fled with Hermia to seek a spot where the law of Athens cannot pursue them. Secretly, we are told, they both steal away into the wood; Demetrius in fury follows them, and impelled by love, Helena fastens herself like a burr upon the heels of the latter. Alike devoid of conscience, Hermia errs at first through want of due obedience to her father, and Demetrius through faithlessness to his betrothed Helena, Helena through treachery to her friend Hermia, and Lysander through mockery of his father-in-law. The strife in the first act, in which we cannot trace any distinct moral motives, is in the third act changed into a perfect confusion owing to influences of an entirely external character. In the fairy world a similar disorder exists between Oberon and Titania. The play of Pyramus and Thisbe, enacted by the honest citizens, forms a comic-tragic counterpart to the tragic-comic point of the plot, depicting two lovers, who behind their parents' backs "think no scorn to woo by moonlight," and through a mere accident come to a tragic end.

The human beings in the main plot of the piece are apparently impelled by mere amorous caprice; Demetrius is betrothed, then Helena pleases him no longer, he trifles with Hermia, and at the close he remembers this breach of faith only as the trifling of youth. External powers and not inward impulses and feelings appear as the cause of these

amorous caprices. In the first place, the brain is heated by the warm season, the first night in May, the ghost-hour of the mystic powers; for even elsewhere Shakespeare occasionally calls a piece of folly the madness of a midsummer-day, or a dog-day's fever; and in the 98th sonnet he speaks of April as the time which puts "the spirit of youth in everything," making even the "heavy Saturn laugh and leap with him." Then Cupid, who appears in the background of the piece as a real character, misleading the judgment and blinding the eyes, takes delight in causing a frivolous breach of faith. And last of all we see the lovers completely in the hand of the fairies, who ensnare their senses and bring them into that tumult of confusion, the unravelling of which, like the entanglement itself, is to come from without. These delusions of blind passion, this jugglery of the senses during the sleep of reason, these changes of mind and errors of "seething brains," these actions without any higher center of a mental and moral bearing, are compared, as it were, to a dream which unrolls before us with its fearful complications, and from which there is no deliverance but in awaking and in the recovery of consciousness.—Gervinus, *Shakespeare Commentaries.*

A LACK OF PATHOS

We have here no pathos. The hurricane of passion does not as yet sweep through Shakespeare's work. No; it is only the romantic and imaginative side of love that is here displayed, the magic whereby longing transmutes and idealizes its object, the element of folly, infatuation, and illusion in desire, with its consequent variability and transitoriness. Man is by nature a being with no inward compass, led astray by his instinct and dreams, and forever deceived either by himself or by others. This Shakespeare realizes, but does not, as yet, take the matter very tragically. Thus the characters whom he here presents, even, or rather especially, in their love-affairs, appear as anything but reasonable beings. The lovers seek and avoid

each other by turns, they love and are loved again; the couples attract each other at cross-purposes; the youth runs after the maiden who shrinks from him, the maiden flees from the man who adores her; and the poet's delicate irony makes the confusion reach its height and find its symbolic expression when the Queen of the Fairies, in the intoxication of a love-dream, recognizes her ideal in a journeyman weaver with an ass's head.—BRANDES, *William Shakespeare.*

THE FAIRY WORLD

Deep reflective power and subtle insight into character came slowly to Shakespeare, as to lesser men, but fancy has its flowering season in youth, and never has it shimmered with a more delicate and iridescent bloom than the fairy-world of *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* Through woodland vistas, where the May-moon struggles with the dusk, elfland opens into sight, ethereal, impalpable, spun out of gossamer and dew, and yet strangely consistent and credible. For this kingdom of shadows reproduces in miniature the structure of human society. Here, as on earth, there are royal rulers, with courts, ministers, warriors, jesters, and, in fine, all the pomp and circumstance of mortal sovereignty. And what plausibility there is in every detail, worked out with an unfaltering instinct for just and delicate gradation! In this realm of the microscopic an acorn-cup is a place of shelter, and a cast snake-skin, or the leathern wing of a rear-mouse, an ample coat: the night tapers are honey-bags of humble-bees lit at the glow-worm's eyes, and the fairy chorus, to whom the third part of a moment is a measurable portion of time, charm from the side of their sleeping mistress such terrible monsters as blindworms, spiders, and beetles black. Over these tiny creatures morality has no sway: theirs is a delicious sense life, a revel of Epicurean joy in nature's sweets and beauties. To dance "by paved fountain or by rushy brook," to rest on banks canopied with flowers, to feed on apricoks

and grapes, and mulberries, to tread the groves till the "eastern gate all fiery red" turns the green sea into gold—such are the delights which make up their round of existence. In Puck, "the lob of spirits," this merry temper takes a more roguish form, a gusto in the topsy-turvy, in the things that befall preposterously, and an elfin glee in gulling mortals according to their folly. With his zest for knavish pranks, for mocking practical jokes upon "gossips" and "wisest aunts," this merry wanderer of the night is indeed a spirit different in sort from the ethereal dream fairies, and it is natural that Oberon's vision of Cupid all armed should be hid from his gross sight. Moonlight and woodland have for him no spell of beauty, but they form a congenial sphere in which to play the game of mystification and cross-purposes. Thus his very unlikeness to the other shadows marks him out as the ally and henchman of Oberon in his quarrel with the fairy queen and her court. For the love troubles of mortals have their miniature counterpart in the jealousy of the elfin royal pair, springing in the main, as befits their nature, from an æsthetic rivalry for the possession of a lovely Indian boy, though by an ingenious touch, which unites the natural and supernatural realms, a further incitement is the undue favor with which Oberon regards the "bouncing Amazon" Hippolyta, balanced by Titania's attachment to Theseus. And as the human wooers are beguiled by the power of Cupid's magic herb, the fairy queen is in like manner victimized. But with correct instinct Shakespeare makes her deception far the more extravagant. Fairyland is the world of perennial surprise, and it must be a glaringly fantastic incongruity that arrests attention there. But the most exacting canons of improbability are satisfied when Titania, whose very being is spun out of light and air and dew, fastens her affections upon the unpurged "mortal grossness" of Bottom, upon humanity with its asinine attributes focussed and gathered to a head. To attack his queen in her essential nature, to make her whose only food is beauty lavish her endearments

upon a misshapen monster, is a masterpiece of revenge on Oberon's part. And so persuasive is the art of the dramatist that our pity is challenged for Titania's infatuation, with its pathetically reckless squandering of pearls before swine, and thus we hail with joy her release from her dotage, her reconciliation with Oberon, and the end of jars in fairyland, celebrated with elfin ritual of dance and song. —Boas, *Shakspere and his Predecessors.*

The wealth of Shakespeare's luxuriant imagination and glowing language seems to have been poured forth in the graphic accounts which he has given us of the fairy tribe. Indeed, the profusion of poetic imagery with which he has so richly clad his fairy characters is unrivalled, and the *Midsummer Night's Dream* holds a unique position in so far as it contains the finest modern artistic realization of the fairy kingdom.—Dyer, *Folklore of Shakespeare.*

PUCK

Puck, or Robin Goodfellow, is the leader of the fairy band. He is the Ariel of the *Midsummer Night's Dream;* and yet as unlike as can be to the Ariel in *The Tempest.* No other poet could have made two such different characters out of the same fanciful materials and situations. Ariel is a minister of retribution, who is touched with the sense of pity at the woes he inflicts. Puck is a mad-cap sprite, full of wantonness and mischief, who laughs at those whom he misleads—"Lord, what fools these mortals be!" Ariel cleaves the air, and executes his mission with the zeal of a winged messenger; Puck is borne along on his fairy errand like the light and glittering gossamer before the breeze. He is, indeed, a most Epicurean little gentleman, dealing in quaint devices, and faring in dainty delights. Prospero and his world of spirits are a set of moralists: but with Oberon and his fairies we are launched at once into the empire of the butterflies.—Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays.*

THESEUS

Shakespeare's Theseus is neither the ruthless soldier of Chaucer nor the heroic Don Juan of Plutarch, but a spirit of the finest temper and the noblest breed who has played both these parts and put them definitely by. A single phrase reminds us of his deluded Ægles and Ariadnes; another, of the injuries he had done his future wife in winning her at the point of the sword. His union with Hippolyta marks his final emergence from the barbarisms and infidelities of his youth into mature humanity and loyal love. His relations with the Athenian lovers have tragic possibilities, like those of Chaucer's Theseus with Arcite and Palamon; but their peril lies no longer in the ferocity of Theseus, but in that of the law he unwillingly administers, and instead of being hardly won to qualified mercy by the tears of his wife and sister he himself "overbears" the despotic vindictiveness of Egeus.—Herford, *The Eversley Shakespeare.*

HIPPOLYTA

Hippolyta is the sensible woman of high rank, with all the natural freedom of a great lady, living and thinking in the open air. Fond of the chase, she remembers with pleasure how the skies, the fountains, seemed all one mutual cry when she bayed the bear with Hercules and Cadmus,—an Amazon as well as a great lady. She is interested in the story of the night. It is "strange and admirable, and grows to something of great constancy." But she reasons on it clearly. Her curiosity does not carry away her good sense. Theseus and she discuss the events of the dream, and the several views of the man and the woman are admirably distinguished. She has little patience with folly and ignorance, and is greatly bored with Pyramus and Thisbe. "This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard," she says, with her plain intelligence. Theseus sees more deeply. "The best in this kind are but shadows and the

worst are no worse, if imagination amend them." But Hippolyta answers quickly. "It must be your imagination then, not theirs." Not for a moment is this Queen asleep, or fanciful, or in a dream. Yet, though a warrior Queen, she does not want a woman's gentleness—

> I love not to see wretchedness o'ercharged,
> And duty in his service perishing.

When she hears Bottom mourning over Thisbe, her sympathy is awakened, even though the stuff is silly. "Beshrew my heart," she cries, "I pity the man."—BROOKE, *On Ten Plays of Shakespeare.*

THESEUS AND HIPPOLYTA

No single trait of the piece impresses the reader more agreeably than the frank display of the spontaneous, natural, and entirely delightful exultation of Theseus and Hippolyta in their approaching nuptials. They are grand creatures both, and they rejoice in each other and in their perfectly accordant love. Nowhere in Shakespeare is there a more imperial man than Theseus; nor, despite her feminine impatience of dulness, a woman more beautiful and more essentially woman-like than Hippolyta. —WINTER, *Preface* to DALY'S *Arrangement for Presentation.*

BOTTOM THE WEAVER

Bottom the Weaver is a character that has not had justice done him. He is the most romantic of mechanics. And what a list of companions he has—Quince the Carpenter, Snug the Joiner, Flute the Bellows-mender, Snout the Tinker, Starveling the Tailor; and then again, what a group of fairy attendants, Puck, Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustard-seed! It has been observed that Shakespeare's characters are constructed upon deep physiological principles; and there is something in this play

which looks very like it. Bottom the Weaver, who takes the lead of

> "This crew of patches, rude mechanicals,
> That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,"

follows a sedentary trade, and he is accordingly represented as conceited, serious, and fantastical. He is ready to undertake anything and everything, as if it was as much a matter of course as the motion of his loom and shuttle. He is for playing the tyrant, the lover, the lady, the lion. "He will roar that it shall do any man's heart good to hear him"; and this being objected to as improper, he still has a resource in his good opinion of himself, and "will roar you an 'twere any nightingale." Snug the Joiner is the moral man of the piece, who proceeds by measurement and discretion in all things. You see him with his rule and compasses in his hand. "Have you the Lion's part written? Pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study."—"You may do it extempo e," says Quince, "for it is nothing but roaring." Starveling the Tailor keeps the peace, and objects to the lion and the drawn sword. "I believe we must leave the killing out when all's done." Starveling, however, does not start tl e objections himself but seconds them when made by others, as if he had not spirit to express his fears without encouragement. It is too much to suppose all this intentional: but it very luckily falls out so. Nature includes all that is implied in the most subtle analytical distinctions; and the same distinctions will be found in Shakespeare. Bottom, who is not only chief actor, but stage-manager for the occasion, has a device to obviate the danger of frightening the ladies: "Write me a prologue, and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not killed indeed; and for better assurance, tell them that I, Pyramus, am not Pyramus, but Bottom the Weaver: this will put them out of fear." Bottom seems to have understood the subject of dramatic illusion at least as well as any modern essayist. If our holiday mechanic rules

the roast among his fellows, he is no less at home in his new character of an ass, "with amiable cheeks, and fair large ears." He instinctively acquires a most learned taste, and grows fastidious in the choice of dried peas and bottled hay. He is quite familiar with his new attendants, and assigns them their parts with all due gravity. "Monsieur Cobweb, good Monsieur, get your weapon in your hand, and kill me a red-hipt humble bee on the top of a thistle, and, good Monsieur, bring me the honey-bag." What an exact knowledge is here shown of natural history!—HAZLITT, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays.*

When Malvolio is trying to break up the midnight revel, the mischievous Maria fleers at him with, "Go shake your ears." That is a performance for which Malvolio is still too distant from his congener. But self-sufficiency succeeds in preserving that structure in Bottom, who is so deep and rich with harmless vanity that he sprouts into the auricular appendages, and he shakes them in the most amiable, frisky way through the Dream of a Midsummer Night. But there is nothing sour about Bottom; he has none of the quality which Margaret Fuller was the first to call "aloofness." He is hale-fellow with all his mates, who appreciate the small gifts which belong to him, and which he good-naturedly strives to render serviceable. Though he is a better fellow than Malvolio, he has all that precisian's ambition; for as the steward could be Olivia's husband as well as any other man,—forsooth, why not?—so Bottom thinks he can play all the parts, rises to their glittering bait, and would appropriate the whole interlude. He is one of those self-made men who occasionally discredit their own bringing up and help us to recover our respect for a liberal education. Like the man of whom Sydney Smith said that he was ready at any moment to undertake the command of the Channel Fleet or run a factory, they have elbowed their way into a conviction that they can fill all the offices from constable to President in a style to astonish men of disciplined intelligence. And they fre-

quently succeed in doing that. Men who unfortunately enjoyed early advantages, and whose lives have perhaps been a protracted training in the virtue as well as wit which lifts state-craft above gambling, have the proper kind of admiration for these chevaliers of industry.

But a highly successful deficiency of education does not make Bottom arrogant. As Athenian dicast, foreman of an English jury, republican officer under investigation, his suavity would be unimpeachable. He is good-tempered, and the first tap of flattery cracks his whole pretension; so that the crafty Quince manages to cast him for Pyramus, who was just such another sweet-faced and destructive lady's man.—Weiss, *Wit, Humor, and Shakespeare.*

In all circles is Billy Bottom the favorite. Being a weaver by trade, thence comes his dictatorial habit; for your weaver is a contemplative man, a politician, and an abstruse inquirer: he thinks much at his loom, as though it were that of Destiny, and, when he emerges from the stronghold of his treadles he sometimes forgets that the consequences of his deductions and dogmas are not as logical as they had appeared. He is indisposed to remain hidden in the background. He likes to play first fiddle in all societies, does Bottom; he would willingly perform the Lover and the Tyrant, also Thisbe and the Lion. When his time comes, he will summon Peaseblossom as authoritatively as he had ordered his Athenian comrades; and will volunteer a special answer, in contradiction of Theseus himself, concerning Thisbe's cue, and, again, regarding the Epilogue. Bottom is self-consistent throughout. In him is exemplified the great truth that no fairyland enchantment of dreams, or love itself, can alter the inherent nature of a full-grown man (as Fielding declared concerning drunkenness, in *Tom Jones*); at most it intensifies, and develops what was latent. He is equally full of ignorant assumption when Titania proffers music or affection, as he had been in his self-estimates of

ability before his transformation. Had he not really been "the shallowest thick-skin of that barren sort," we might have cherished the idea of his career becoming thereafter dignified by a remembrance of the fairy realm into which he and he alone, had been for awhile admitted; especially as we have, in our own possession, the original Greek ballad which Peter Quince was to have written thereon. But the memory of his Ass's ears was the only perennial bequest of his Midsummer Night's Dream.—EBSWORTH, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the *Shakespeare Quarto Fac-Simile.*

HELENA

Helena's speech:—

"I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight," &c.

I am convinced that Shakspere availed himself of the title of this play in his own mind, and worked upon it as a dream throughout, but especially, and, perhaps, unpleasingly, in this broad determination of ungrateful treachery in Helena, so undisguisedly avowed to herself, and this, too, after the witty cool philosophizing that precedes. The act itself is natural, and the resolve so to act is, I fear, likewise too true a picture of the lax hold which principles have on a woman's heart, when opposed to, or even separated from, passion and inclination. For women are less hypocrites to their own minds than men are, because in general they feel less proportionate abhorrence of moral evil in and for itself, and more of its outward consequences, as detection, and loss of character, than men,—their natures being almost wholly extroitive. Still, however just in itself, the representation of this is not poetical; we shrink from it, and cannot harmonize it with the ideal.—COLERIDGE, *Lectures on Shakspere.*

INFLUENCE OF THE PLAY ON LITERATURE

Sometime between 1590 and 1595 appeared the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, the crown and glory of English

delineation of the fairy world. Scarce any one of Shakespeare's plays has had a literary influence so immediate, so widespread, and so enduring. As pictured by Shakespeare, the fairy realm became, almost at once, a convention of literature in which numberless poets sought inspiration and material. I need only mention Drayton, Ben Jonson, Herrick, Randolph, and Milton himself. Apart from any question of its relation to popular belief, of any grounding in popular fancy, Shakespeare's vision stood by itself, and was accepted as the ideal presentment of fairydom which, for two centuries at least, has signified to the average Englishman of culture the world depicted in the *Midsummer Night's Dream.* To this day, works are being produced deriving form and circumstance and inspiration (such as it is) wholly from Shakespeare.—Nutt, *The Fairy Mythology of Shakespeare.*

CHARACTERIZATIONS

September 29, 1662. To the King's Theatre, where we saw "Midsummer Night's Dream," which I had never seen before, nor shall ever again, for it is the most insipid, ridiculous play, that ever I saw in my life.—Samuel Pepys, *Diary.*

Of all his works, the *Midsummer Night's Dream* leaves the strongest impression on my mind that this miserable world must have, for once at least, contained a happy man. This play is so purely delicious, so little intermixed with the painful passions from which Poetry distils her sterner sweets, so fragrant with hilarity, so bland and yet so bold, that I cannot imagine Shakespeare's mind to have been in any other frame than that of healthful ecstasy when the sparks of inspiration thrilled through his brain in composing it.—Thomas Campbell, *Introductory Notice.*

Of the characters constituting the serious action of this play Theseus and Hippolyta are entirely devoid of interest.

Lysander and Demetrius, and Hermia and Helena, scarcely merit notice, except on account of the frequent combination of elegance, delicacy, and vigor, in their complaints, lamentations, and pleadings, and the ingenuity displayed in the management of their cross-purposed love through three several changes. . . . Bottom and his companions are probably highly-drawn caricatures of some of the monarchs of the stage whom Shakespeare found in favor and popularity when he first appeared in London.—SKOTTOWE, *Life of Shakespeare.*

The *Midsummer Night's Dream* is, I believe, altogether original in one of the most beautiful conceptions that ever visited the mind of the poet, the fairy machinery. A few before him had dealt in a vulgar and clumsy manner in the popular superstition; but the sportive, invisible population of the air and earth, long since established in the creed of childhood and of those simple as children, had never for a moment been blended with "human mortals" among the personages of the drama.—HALLAM, *Literature of Europe.*

I know not any play of Shakespeare's in which the language is so uniformly unexceptionable as this. It is all poetry, and sweeter poetry was never written. One defect there may be. Perhaps the distress of Hermia and Helena, arising from Puck's blundering application of Love-in-Idleness, is too serious, too real for so fantastic a source. Yet their altercation is so very, very beautiful, so girlish, so loveable that one cannot wish it away. The characters might be arranged by a chromatic scale, gradually shading from the thick-skinned Bottom and the rude mechanicals, the absolute old father, the proud and princely Theseus and his warrior bride, to the lusty, high-hearted wooers, and so to the sylph-like maidens, till the line melts away in Titania and her fairy train, who seem as they were made of the moonshine wherein they gambol.—HARTLEY COLERIDGE, *Essays.*

In the *Midsummer Night's Dream* there flows a luxuriant vein of the boldest and most fantastical invention; the most extraordinary combination of the most dissimilar ingredients seems to have arisen without effort by some ingenious and lucky accident, and the colors are of such clear transparency that we think the whole of the variegated fabric may be blown away with a breath. The fairy world here described resembles those elegant pieces of Arabesque where little Genii, with butterfly wings, rise, half embodied, above the flower cups.—SCHLEGEL, *Lectures.*

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THESEUS, *Duke of Athens*
EGEUS, *father to Hermia*
LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, } *in love with Hermia*
PHILOSTRATE, *master of the revels to Theseus*
QUINCE, *a carpenter*
SNUG, *a joiner*
BOTTOM, *a weaver*
FLUTE, *a bellows-mender*
SNOUT, *a tinker*
STARVELING, *a tailor*

HIPPOLYTA, *queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus*
HERMIA, *daughter to Egeus, in love with Lysander*
HELENA, *in love with Demetrius*

OBERON, *king of the fairies*
TITANIA, *queen of the fairies*
PUCK, *or Robin Goodfellow*
PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, MUSTARDSEED, } *fairies*

Other fairies attending their King and Queen. Attendants on Theseus and Hippolyta

SCENE: *Athens, and a wood near it*

SYNOPSIS

By J. Ellis Burdick

ACT I

Theseus, Duke of Athens, and Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, are betrothed. Theseus finding the time before the marriage-ceremony hanging heavily on his hands orders the revels to start immediately. Six Athenian tradesmen—Quince, Snug, Bottom, Flute, Snout, and Starveling—prepare a play for the Duke.

In Athens is a law which says a daughter must marry the man chosen by her father or her father can cause her to be put to death. Among the Athenian maidens is one named Hermia, who loves and is loved by a youth named Lysander. Another youth, Demetrius by name, also desires to marry Hermia. The latter is favored by Egeus, Hermia's father. Egeus brings the trio before the Duke, invoking him to command Hermia to wed Demetrius. Theseus orders her to obey her father within four days, allowing the alternative of death or of a life in a convent. Hermia and Lysander decide to flee to the latter's aunt in another city. They reveal their intentions to Helena, who loves Demetrius but has been jilted by him. She resolves to tell Demetrius of the lovers' flight that she may have the uncertain pleasure of following him to Hermia and Lysander's trysting-place.

ACT II

In the forest near Athens where Lysander and Hermia are to meet dwell the fairies over whom Oberon and Titania rule. This fairy king and queen are quarreling over a

changeling-boy which Titania refuses to give to Oberon for a page. Oberon orders Puck to procure the flower called "love-in-idleness" so that he can put the juice of it on Titania's eyes while she is sleeping, in order that she may love the first thing she sees when her eyes open. While Oberon is waiting for Puck's return, Demetrius and Helena enter the wood. Demetrius is reproaching Helena for following him. Oberon is touched by the lady's distress, and on Puck's return orders him to search out Demetrius and put some of the love-juice on his eyes in order that he may return Helena's love. Puck, in obeying his master, mistakes Lysander for Demetrius and anoints his eyes. Lysander awakes just as Helena is passing and straightway abandons Hermia for her.

ACT III

The Athenian tradesmen have chosen this same wood in which to rehearse their play. Puck overhears them and determines to have some fun. He puts an ass's head on Bottom the weaver and the other players flee in terror. Puck then leads Bottom to where Titania is sleeping, her eyes having been anointed by Oberon. When she awakes her enchanted gaze falls on Bottom with his ass's head and she begins to make love to him.

In another part of the woods the lovers become greatly bewildered. Oberon, discovering Puck's mistake, himself anoints Demetrius's eyes, and he, seeing Helena on first awakening, returns to his old love for her. Helena believes that her three companions are mocking her and Hermia is dazed by the situation. Demetrius and Lysander retire to fight for the love of Helena, but the fairies interpose and prevent the duel by causing the young people to wander about until, tired out, they all fall asleep. Then Puck makes amends for his blunder by anointing Lysander's eyes with another lotion which causes him to return to his normal state.

ACT IV

Titania continues to be enamoured of Bottom until Oberon releases her from the enchantment, the fairy-queen having first yielded the changeling-boy to Oberon. The ass's head is removed from Bottom's shoulders, and he rejoins his companions in the city. The Duke, accompanied by Egeus, the father of Hermia, is hunting in these same woods. The party discovers the four lovers sleeping and arouses them with their horns. The situation is explained; Egeus withdraws his objection to Hermia's marriage with Lysander, since Demetrius now desires to wed Helena.

ACT V

The Duke and Hippolyta, Lysander and Hermia, and Demetrius and Helena, celebrate their wedding feasts together in the Duke's palace. Bottom and his friends present their play. After all have retired for the night, the fairies dance through the rooms, scattering blessings and good-wishes.

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

ACT FIRST

Scene I

Athens. The palace of Theseus.

Enter Theseus, Hippolyta, Philostrate, and Attendants.

The. Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace; four happy days bring in
Another moon: but, O, methinks, how slow
This old moon wanes! she lingers my desires,
Like to a step-dame, or a dowager,
Long withering out a young man's revenue.
Hip. Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;
Four nights will quickly dream away the time;
And then the moon, like to a silver bow
New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night
Of our solemnities.

2. *"four happy days."* The subsequent action does not agree with this reiterated statement, the marriage festivity taking place on the evening of the next day but one.—C. H. H.

10. *"new-bent";* Rowe's correction of *"now bent,"* the reading of the Quartos and Folios.—I. G.

The. Go, Philostrate,
Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments;
Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth:
Turn melancholy forth to funerals;
The pale companion is not for our pomp.
[*Exit Philostrate.*
Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,
And won thy love, doing thee injuries;
But I will wed thee in another key,
With pomp, with triumph and with reveling.

Enter Egeus, Hermia, Lysander, and Demetrius.

Ege. Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke! 20
The. Thanks, good Egeus: what 's the news with thee?
Ege. Full of vexation come I, with complaint
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.
Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble lord,
This man hath my consent to marry her.
Stand forth, Lysander: and, my gracious duke,
This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child:

11. *"Philostrate"* is the name assumed by Arcite in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale;* it occurs too in Plutarch's *Lives,* where are to be found also the names, Lysander, and Demetrius.—I. G.

20. Steevens set this down as "a misapplication of a modern title." If it be such, Shakespeare is not responsible for it, as Theseus is repeatedly called *duk* in Chaucer's Knight's Tale, to which the Poet was evidently indebted for some of the material of this play. But indeed this application of *duke* to the heroes of antiquity was quite common; the word being from the Latin *dux,* which means a chief or leader of any sort. Thus in 1 Chronicles, i. 51, we have a list of "the *dukes* of Edom."—H. N. H.

27. The second Folio reads, *"this hath bewitched";* the earlier edition *"this man";* perhaps we should read *"this man hath 'witched."* —I. G.

Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,
And interchanged love-tokens with my child:
Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung,
With feigning voice, verses of feigning love;
And stolen the impression of her fantasy
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits,
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats, messengers
Of strong prevailment in unharden'd youth:
With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart;
Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,
To stubborn harshness: and, my gracious duke,
Be it so she will not here before your Grace
Consent to marry with Demetrius,
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens,
As she is mine, I may dispose of her:
Which shall be either to this gentleman
Or to her death, according to our law
Immediately provided in that case.

The. What say you, Hermia? be advised, fair maid;
To you your father should be as a god;
One that composed your beauties; yea, and one
To whom you are but as a form in wax
By him imprinted and within his power

32. *"stolen the impression of her fantasy,"* imprinted thyself surreptitiously upon her affections; *stolen* seems to combine the notions of "secretly," "by false pretences," and "without a title."—C. H. H.

44. *"our law";* Solon's laws gave a father the power of life and death over his child.—I. G.

To leave the figure or disfigure it.
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.
Her. So is Lysander.
The. In himself he is;
But in this kind, wanting your father's voice,
The other must be held the worthier.
Her. I would my father look'd but with my eyes.
The. Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.
Her. I do entreat your Grace to pardon me.
I know not by what power I am made bold,
Nor how it may concern my modesty,
In such a presence here to plead my thoughts;
But I beseech your Grace that I may know
The worst that may befall me in this case,
If I refuse to wed Demetrius.
The. Either to die the death, or to adjure
For ever the society of men.
Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires;
Know of your youth, examine well your blood,
Whether, if you yield not to your father's choice,
You can endure the livery of a nun;
For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd,
To live a barren sister all your life,
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.
Thrice-blessed they that master so their blood,
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;
But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd,
Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness.
Her. So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,

Ere I will yield my virgin patent up
Unto his lordship, whose unwished yoke
My soul consents not to give sovereignty.
The. Take time to pause; and, by the next new moon,—
The sealing-day betwixt my love and me,
For everlasting bond of fellowship,—
Upon that day either prepare to die
For disobedience to your father's will,
Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would;
Or on Diana's altar to protest
For aye austerity and single life.
Dem. Relent, sweet Hermia: and, Lysander, yield
Thy crazed title to my certain right.
Lys. You have her father's love, Demetrius;
Let me have Hermia's: do you marry him.
Ege. Scornful Lysander! true, he hath my love,
And what is mine my love shall render him.
And she is mine, and all my right of her
I do estate unto Demetrius.
Lys. I am, my lord, as well derived as he,
As well possess'd; my love is more than his;
My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,
If not with vantage, as Demetrius';
And, which is more than all these boasts can be,
I am beloved of beauteous Hermia:
Why should not I then prosecute my right?
Demetrius, I 'll avouch it to his head,
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,
And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,
Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,
Upon this spotted and inconstant man.

The. I must confess that I have heard so much,
And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof;
But, being over-full of self-affairs,
My mind did lose it. But, Demetrius, come;
And come, Egeus; you shall go with me,
I have some private schooling for you both.
For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself
To fit your fancies to your father's will;
Or else the law of Athens yields you up,—
Which by no means we may extenuate,—
To death, or to a vow of single life.
Come, my Hippolyta: what cheer, my love?
Demetrius and Egeus, go along:
I must employ you in some business
Against our nuptial, and confer with you
Of something nearly that concerns yourselves.
Ege. With duty and desire we follow you.
[*Exeunt all but Lysander and Hermia.*
Lys. How now, my love! why is your cheek so pale?
How chance the roses there do fade so fast?
Her. Belike for want of rain, which I could well
Beteem them from the tempest of my eyes.
Lys. Aye me! for aught that I could ever read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth;
But, either it was different in blood,—
Her. O cross! too high to be enthrall'd to low.
Lys. Or else misgraffed in respect of years,—
Her. O spite! too old to be engaged to young.
Lys. Or else it stood upon the choice of friends,—
Her. O hell! to choose love by another's eyes.

Lys. Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it
Making it momentany as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream;
Brief as the lightning in the collied night,
That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,
And ere a man hath power to say 'Behold!'
The jaws of darkness do devour it up:
So quick bright things come to confusion.
Her. If then true lovers have been ever cross'd,
It stands as an edict in destiny:
Then let us teach our trial patience,
Because it is a customary cross,
As due to love as thoughts and dreams and sighs,
Wishes and tears, poor fancy's followers.
Lys. A good persuasion: therefore, hear me, Hermia.
I have a widow aunt, a dowager
Of great revenue, and she hath no child:
From Athens is her house remote seven leagues;
And she respects me as her only son.
There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;
And to that place the sharp Athenian law
Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me, then,
Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night;
And in the wood, a league without the town,
Where I did meet thee once with Helena,
To do observance to a morn of May,

159, 160. These lines should perhaps be transposed.

167. *"to do observance to a morn of May," cp. Knight's Tale,* 1500: *"And for to doon his observance to May."—I. G.*

There will I stay for thee.

Her. My good Lysander!
I swear to thee, by Cupid's strongest bow,
By his best arrow with the golden head,
By the simplicity of Venus' doves,
By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves,
And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen,
When the false Troyan under sail was seen,
By all the vows that ever men have broke,
In number more than ever women spoke,
In that same place thou hast appointed me,
To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.

Lys. Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

Enter Helena.

Her. God speed fair Helena! whither away?

Hel. Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.

Touching the rites of this ancient holiday,—a time that inspired the seraph-souled Chaucer to sing,

> "O Maye, with all thy floures and thy grene,
> Right welcome be thou, faire freshe May,
> I hope that I some grene here getten may,"—

Stowe informs us how our ancestors were wont to go out into "the sweet meadows and green woods, there to rejoice their spirits with the beauty and savor of sweet flowers, and with the harmony of birds praising God in their kind." But Stubbs, the atrabilious Puritan, in his *Anatomie of Abuses,* speaks very differently: he accounts for the delight others take in the season thus: "And no marvel, for there is a great lord present among them, as superintendent over their pastimes and sports, namely, Sathan, Prince of Hell." The spirit of the olden time, however, seems to have revived in Wordsworth's Odes to May.—H. N. H.

170. *"his best arrow with the golden head,"* that which, according to Ovid, excited love, as the arrow with a leaden head quelled it.—C. H. H.

Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!
Your eyes are lode-stars; and your tongue's sweet air
More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,
When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.
Sickness is catching: O, were favor so,
Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go;
My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,
My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.
Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,
The rest I 'ld give to be to you translated.
O, teach me how you look; and with what art
You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart!

Her. I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

Hel. O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!

Her. I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

Hel. O that my prayers could such affection move!

Her. The more I hate, the more he follows me.

Hel. The more I love, the more he hateth me.

Her. His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.

Hel. None, but your beauty; would that fault were mine!

Her. Take comfort: he no more shall see my face;
Lysander and myself will fly this place.
Before the time I did Lysander see,

183. The *"lode-star"* is the leading or guiding star, that is, the *polar star.* The magnet is for the same reason called the *lode*-stone.—H. N. H.

Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me:
O, then, what graces in my love do dwell,
That he hath turn'd a heaven unto a hell!
Lys. Helen, to you our minds we will unfold:
To-morrow night, when Phœbe doth behold
Her silver visage in the watery glass,
Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass,
A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal,
Through Athens' gates have we devised to steal.
Her. And in the wood, where often you and I
Upon faint primrose-beds were wont to lie,
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,
There my Lysander and myself shall meet;
And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,
To seek new friends and stranger companies.
Farewell, sweet playfellow: pray thou for us;
And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius!
Keep word, Lysander: we must starve our sight
From lovers' food till morrow deep midnight.
Lys. I will, my Hermia. [*Exit Herm.*
Helena, adieu:
As you on him, Demetrius dote on you! [*Exit.*
Hel. How happy some o'er other some can be!
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.
But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;
He will not know what all but he do know;
And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,
So I, admiring of his qualities:
Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
Love can transpose to form and dignity:

219. *"stranger companies";* Theobald's emendation of *"strange companions,"* which is the reading of the Quartos and Folios.—I. G.

Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;
And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind:
Nor hath Love's mind of any judgment taste;
Wings, and no eyes, figure unheedy haste:
And therefore is Love said to be a child,
Because in choice he is so oft beguiled.
As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,
So the boy Love is perjured everywhere:
For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,
He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine;
And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
So he dissolved, and showers of oaths did melt.
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight:
Then to the wood will he to-morrow night
Pursue her; and for this intelligence
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense:
But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
To have his sight thither and back again. [*Exit.*

Scene II

The same. Quince's house.

Enter Quince, Snug, Bottom, Flute, Snout, and Starveling.

Quin. Is all our company here?

Bot. You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.

Quin. Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the duke and the

duchess, on his wedding-day at night.

Bot. First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on; then read the names of the actors; and so grow to a point.

Quin. Marry, our play is, The most lamentable comedy, and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.

Bot. A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves.

Quin. Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

Bot. Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

Quin. You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

Bot. What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant?

Quin. A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

Bot. That will ask some tears in the true performing of it: if I do it, let the audience look to their eyes; I will move storms, I will condole in some measure. To the rest: yet my chief humor is for a tyrant: I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

11. *"The most lamentable comedy,"* &c. *Cp.* the title of Preston's *Cambyses, "a lamentable tragedy mixed full of pleasant mirth";* &c.—I. G.

32. *"Ercles"—Hercules*—was one of the roarers of the old rude stage. Thus Greene in his *Groatsworth of Wit,* 1592: "The twelve labours of Hercules have I terribly thundered on the stage."—H. N. H.

The raging rocks
And shivering shocks
Shall break the locks
Of prison-gates;
And Phibbus' car
Shall shine from far,
And make and mar
The foolish Fates.

This was lofty! Now name the rest of the players. This is Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein; a lover is more condoling.

Quin. Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

Flu. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

Flu. What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

Quin. It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

Flu. Nay, faith, let not me play a woman; I have a beard coming.

Quin. That 's all one: you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

Bot. An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too, I 'll speak in a monstrous little voice, 'Thisne, Thisne;' 'Ah Pyramus, my lover

54. This speech of Peter Quince's shows, what is known from other sources, that the parts of women were used to be played by boys, or, if these could not be had, by men in masks. Prynne, the Puritan hero, informs us that female actors appeared on the stage at the Blackfriars as early as 1629. The pious dare-devil comes down upon women's acting with a tempest of wrath; but then he is still harder upon the personating of women by boys and men: he could endure the histrionic art nowhere but in religion.—H. N. H.

57. *"Thisne, Thisne,"* so the Quartos and Folios: perhaps this spelling was intentional to represent Bottom's attempt to speak the

dear! thy Thisby dear, and lady dear!'

Quin. No, no; you must play Pyramus: and, Flute, you Thisby.

Bot. Well, proceed.

Quin. Robin Starveling, the tailor.

Star. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother. Tom Snout, the tinker.

Snout. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. You, Pyramus' father: myself, Thisby's father: Snug, the joiner; you, the lion's part: and, I hope, here is a play fitted.

Snug. Have you the lion's part written? pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

Quin. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

Bot. Let me play the lion too: I will roar, that I will do any man's heart good to hear me; I will roar, that I will make the duke say, 'Let him roar again, let him roar again.'

Quin. An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.

All. That would hang us, every mother's son.

Bot. I grant you, friends, if you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us: but I will

name "in a monstrous little voice." The words may, however, be an error for *"thisne, thisne," i. e.* "in this manner, in this manner," *"thissen"* being used in this sense in various dialects.—I. G.

aggravate my voice so, that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale.

Quin. You can play no part but Pyramus; for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man; a proper man, as one shall see in a summer's day; a most lovely, gentleman-like man: therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

Bot. Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

Quin. Why, what you will.

Bot. I will discharge it in either your straw color beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French crown color beard, your perfect yellow.

Quin. Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play barefaced. But, masters, here are your parts: and I am to entreat you, request you, and desire you, to con them by to-morrow night; and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moon-light; there will we rehearse, for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogged with company, and our devices known. In the mean time I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not.

Bot. We will meet; and there we may rehearse

101. It seems to have been a custom to stain or dye the beard. So, in Ben Jonson's *Silent Woman:* "I have fitted my divine and canonist, *dyed their beards* and all." And, in *The Alchemist:* "He has *dy'd his beard* and all."—H. N. H.

111. The *"properties"* were the furnishings of the stage, the keeper

most obscenely and courageously. Take pains; be perfect: adieu.

Quin. At the duke's oak we meet.

Bot. Enough; hold or cut bow-strings. [*Exeunt.*

of which is still called the *property*-man. A curious list of them is given by Brome, 1640:

"He has got into our tiring-house amongst us,
And ta'en a strict survey of all our properties;
Our statues and our images of gods,
Our planets and our constellations,
Our giants, monsters, furies, beasts, and bugbears,
Our helmets, shields and vizors, hairs and beards,
Our pasteboard marchpanes, and our wooden pies."—H. N. H.

118. *"Hold or cut bow-strings";* Capell informs us that this was a common pledge of punctuality among archers; as we should say,—"I'll be there, *rain* or *shine*."—H. N. H.

ACT SECOND

Scene I

A wood near Athens.

Enter, from opposite sides, a Fairy, and Puck.

Puck. How now, spirit! whither wander you?
Fai. Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire,
I do wander every where,
Swifter than the moon's sphere;

7. Mr. Collier informs us that "Coleridge, in his lectures in 1818, was very emphatic in his praises of the beauty of these lines: 'the measure,' he said, 'had been invented and employed by Shakespeare for the sake of its appropriateness to the rapid and airy motion of the Fairy by whom the passage is delivered.'" And in his *Literary Remains,* after analyzing the measure, he speaks of the "delightful effect on the ear," caused by "the sweet transition" from the amphimacers of the first four lines to the trochaic of the next two. An absurd passion for rhymed regularity has caused *moon's* to be usually printed as a dissyllable, *moones.* There is no authority for this: besides, it mars the beauty of the verse; and is quite unnecessary, as the pronouncing of *moon's* naturally occupies the time of a trochee. Coleridge is rather hard upon Theobald for shortening *thorough* into *through,* as he had the authority of the folio and one of the quartos for doing so. But if any confirmation of *thorough* be wanted, we have it in Drayton's imitation of the passage in his *Nymphidia,* 1619:

"Thorough brake, thorough brier,
Thorough muck, thorough mier,
Thorough water, thorough fier,
And thus goes Puck about it."—H. N. H.

And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be:
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favors,
In those freckles live their savors:
I must go seek some dewdrops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.
Farewell, thou lob of spirits; I 'll be gone:
Our queen and all her elves come here anon.
Puck. The king doth keep his revels here to-night:

9. These *"orbs"* were the verdant circles which the sweet old superstition here so sweetly delineated called fairy-rings, supposing them to be made by the night-tripping fairies dancing their merry roundels. As the ground became parched under the feet of the moonlight dancers, Puck's office was to refresh it with sprinklings of dew, thus making it greener than ever. Science has of course brushed away the charm that once hung about these circles; but we are not aware that it has given any better explanation of them than that of the old superstition.—H. N. H.

10. The allusion is to Elizabeth's band of gentlemen *pensioners*, who were chosen from among the handsomest and tallest young men of family and fortune; they were dressed in habits richly garnished with *gold lace*.—H. N. H.

16. *"Lob";* it would seem that Puck, though he could "put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes," was heavy and sluggish in comparison with the other fairies: he was the *lubber* of the spirit tribe. Shakespeare's *"lob* of spirits" is the same as Milton's *"lubbar* fiend," thus spoken of in his *L'Allegro:*

"And he, by friar's lantern led,
Tells how the drudging goblin swet,
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail hath thresh'd the corn,
That ten day-laborers could not end:
Then lies him down the lubbar fiend,
And, stretch'd out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,
And crop-full out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin rings."—H. N. H.

Take heed the queen come not within his sight;
For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,
Because that she as her attendant hath
A lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king;
She never had so sweet a changeling:
And jealous Oberon would have the child
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild;
But she perforce withholds the loved boy,
Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy:
And now they never meet in grove or green,
By fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen,
But they do square, that all their elves for fear
Creep into acorn cups and hide them there.

Fai. Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
Call'd Robin Goodfellow: are not you he
That frights the maidens of the villagery;
Skim milk, and sometimes labor in the quern,
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;
And sometime make the drink to bear no barm;
Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?
Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck,
You do their work, and they shall have good luck:
Are not you he?

23. A *"changeling"* was a child taken or given in *exchange;* it being a roguish custom of the fairies, if a child of great promise were born, to steal it away, and leave an ugly, or foolish, or ill-conditioned one in its stead.—H. N. H.

Puck. Thou speak'st aright;
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
I jest to Oberon, and make him smile,
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,
Neighing in likeness of a filly foal:
And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
In very likeness of a roasted crab;
And when she drinks, against her lips I bob
And on her withered dewlap pour the ale.
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me:
Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,
And 'tailor' cries, and falls into a cough;

42. That this whole account of Puck was gathered from the popular notions of the time, might be shown from many passages. Thus, in Harsnet's *Declaration of Popish Impostures:* "And if that the bowl of curds and cream were not duly set out for Robin Goodfellow, the friar, and Sisse the dairy-maid, why, then either the pottage was burnt next day in the pot, or the cheeses would not curdle, or the butter would not come, or the ale in the fat never would have good head." Likewise, in Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft:* "Your grandames' maids were wont to set a bowl of milk for him, for his pains in grinding malt and mustard, and sweeping the house at midnight;—this white bread and milk was his standing fee." See also the ballad entitled *The Merry Pranks of Robin Goodfellow,* in *Percy's Reliques,* and Drayton's *Nymphidia;* from the latter of which we subjoin one stanza:

"This Puck seems but a dreaming dolt,
Still walking like a ragged colt,
And oft out of a bush doth bolt,
Of purpose to deceive us;
And, leading us, makes us to stray
Long winter nights out of the way,
And when we stick in mire and clay,
He doth with laughter leave us."—H. N. H.

54. *"tailor,"* an exclamation made in suddenly falling backwards, which Johnson thought he remembered to have been customary in his youth. Probably it was a mild execration, connected with the traditional repute of tailors as thieves or as cowards.—C. H. H.

And then the whole quire hold their hips and laugh;
And waxen in their mirth, and neeze, and swear
A merrier hour was never wasted there.
But, room, fairy! here comes Oberon.

Fai. And here my mistress. Would that he were gone!

Enter, from one side, Oberon, with his train; from the other, Titania, with hers.

Obe. Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

Tita. What, jealous Oberon! Fairies, skip hence:
I have forsworn his bed and company.

Obe. Tarry, rash wanton: am not I thy lord?

Tita. Then I must be thy lady: but I know
When thou hast stolen away from fairy land,
And in the shape of Corin sat all day,
Playing on pipes of corn, and versing love
To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here,
Come from the farthest steppe of India?
But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,
Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,
To Theseus must be wedded, and you come
To give their bed joy and prosperity.

54, 55. The Quartos and Folios read *"coffe . . . loffe,"* for the sake of the rhyme.—I. G.

56. *"Waxen"* seems to be an old plural form of *wax;* the meaning of course being, *increase* in their mirth. Dr. Farmer proposed to read *yexen. Yex* is an old synonyme of *hiccup:* so that the sense in this case would be, they laugh themselves into a hiccuping; which is indeed very good, but by no means such as to warrant the change. The Chiswick editor adopted *yexen:* why he should think that only "a glimmering of sense may be extracted from the passage as it stands in the old copies," is too deep for us.—H. N. H.

58. *"room";* probably pronounced as a dissyllable.—I. G.

Obe. How canst thou thus for shame, Titania,
Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?
Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night
From Perigenia, whom he ravished?
And make him with fair Ægle break his faith,
With Ariadne and Antiopa?
Tita. These are the forgeries of jealousy:
And never, since the middle summer's spring,
Met we on hill, in dale, forest, or mead,
By paved fountain or by rushy brook,
Or in the beached margent of the sea,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.
Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea
Contagious fogs; which, falling in the land,
Have every pelting river made so proud,
That they have overborne their continents:
The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,

78. *"Perigenia,"* called *"Perigouna"* in North's *Plutarch;* she was the daughter of the famous robber Sinnis, by whom Theseus had a son, Menaloppus.—I. G.

79. *"Ægle";* Rowe's correction for *"Eagles"* of the Quartos and Folios; probably *"Eagles"* was for *"Ægles,"* a form due to North's *Plutarch,* where it is stated that some think Theseus left Ariadne "because he was in love with another, as by these verses should appear,

'Ægles the nymph was lov'd of Theseus,
Who was the daughter of Panopeus.' "—I. G.

80. *"Antiopa,"* said to be the name of the Amazon queen, and the mother of Hippolytus.—I. G.

The ploughman lost his sweat; and the green corn
Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard:
The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
And crows are fatted with the murrion flock;
The nine men's morris is fill'd up with mud;
And the quaint mazes in the wanton green,
For lack of tread, are undistinguishable:
The human mortals want their winter here;
No night is now with hymn or carol blest:
Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
That rheumatic diseases do abound:
And thorough this distemperature we see
The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose;
And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
Is, as in mockery, set: the spring, the summer,
The childing autumn, angry winter, change
Their wonted liveries; and the mazed world,
By their increase, now knows not which is which:

98. *"Nine Men Morris";* this was a plat of green turf cut into a sort of chess board, for the rustic youth to exercise their skill upon. The game was called nine men's morris, because the players had each nine men, which they moved along the lines cut in the ground, until one side had taken or penned up all those on the other. The game is said to have been brought into England by the Normans, under the name of *merelles,* which meant *counters,* and was corrupted into *morris.*—H. N. H.

99. *"The quaint mazes in the wanton green"* were where the youths and maidens led their happy dances in the open air, before people were so wise but that they would suffer kind thoughts and tender loves to be cherished by the remembered pleasures of each other's company.—H. N. H.

And this same progeny of evils comes
From our debate, from our dissension;
We are their parents and original.
Obe. Do you amend it, then; it lies in you:
Why should Titania cross her Oberon?
I do but beg a little changeling boy,
To be my henchman.
Tita. Set your heart at rest:
The fairy land buys not the child of me.
His mother was a votaress of my order:
And, in the spiced Indian air, by night,
Full often hath she gossip'd by my side;
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
Marking the embarked traders on the flood;
When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive
And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;
Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait
Following,—her womb then rich with my young squire,—
Would imitate, and sail upon the land,
To fetch me trifles, and return again,
As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.
But she, being mortal, of that boy did die;
And for her sake do I rear up her boy;
And for her sake I will not part with him.
Obe. How long within this wood intend you stay?
Tita. Perchance till after Theseus' wedding-day.
If you will patiently dance in our round,
And see our moonlight revels, go with us;
If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.
Obe. Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.
Tita. Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away!

We shall chide downright, if I longer stay.
[*Exit Titania with her Train.*

Obe. Well, go thy way: thou shalt not from this grove
Till I torment thee for this injury.
My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou remem-berest
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid, on a dolphin's back,
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,
That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
To hear the sea-maid's music.

Puck. I remember.

Obe. That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal throned by the west,
And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts:
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
And the imperial votaress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:
It fell upon a little western flower,
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,
And maidens call it love-in-idleness.

168. *"Love-in-idleness";* the tri-colored violet, commonly called pansy, or heartsease, is here meant: one or two of its petals are of

Fetch me that flower; the herb I shew'd thee once:
The juice of it on sleeping eye-lids laid
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.
Fetch me this herb; and be thou here again
Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

Puck. I 'll put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes. [*Exit.*

Obe. Having once this juice,
I 'll watch Titania when she is asleep,
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.
The next thing then she waking looks upon,
Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,
On meddling monkey, or on busy ape,
She shall pursue it with the soul of love:
And ere I take this charm from off her sight,
As I can take it with another herb,
I 'll make her render up her page to me.
But who comes here? I am invisible;
And I will overhear their conference.

Enter Demetrius, Helena following him.

Dem. I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.
Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?
The one I 'll slay, the other slayeth me.
Thou told'st me they were stolen unto this wood,
And here am I, and wode within this wood,

a purple color. It has other fanciful and expressive names, such as—Cuddle me to you; Three faces under a hood; Herb trinity, etc. —H. N. H.

Because I cannot meet my Hermia.
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.
Hel. You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant;
But yet you draw not iron, for my heart
Is true as steel: leave you your power to draw,
And I shall have no power to follow you.
Dem. Do I entice you? do I speak you fair?
Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth
Tell you, I do not nor I cannot love you?
Hel. And even for that do I love you the more.
I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,
The more you beat me, I will fawn on you:
Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,
Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,
Unworthy as I am, to follow you.
What worser place can I beg in your love,—
And yet a place of high respect with me,—
Than to be used as you use your dog?
Dem. Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit;
For I am sick when I do look on thee.
Hel. And I am sick when I look not on you.
Dem. You do impeach your modesty too much,
To leave the city, and commit yourself
Into the hands of one that loves you not;
To trust the opportunity of night
And the ill counsel of a desert place

195. *"Adamant";* "There is now a dayes a kind of *adamant* which draweth unto it fleshe, and the same so strongly, that it hath power to knit and tie together two mouthes of contrary persons, and drawe the heart of a man out of his bodie without offending any part of him." *Certaine Secrete Wonders of Nature,* by Edward Fenton, 1569.—H. N. H.

With the rich worth of your virginity.
Hel. Your virtue is my privilege: for that
It is not night when I do see your face,
Therefore I think I am not in the night;
Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company,
For you in my respect are all the world:
Then how can it be said I am alone,
When all the world is here to look on me?
Dem. I 'll run from thee and hide me in the brakes,
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.
Hel. The wildest hath not such a heart as you.
Run when you will, the story shall be changed:
Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase;
The dove pursues the griffin; the mild hind
Makes speed to catch the tiger; bootless speed,
When cowardice pursues, and valor flies.
Dem. I will not stay thy questions; let me go:
Or, if thou follow me, do not believe
But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.
Hel. Aye, in the temple, in the town, the field,
You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius!
Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex:
We cannot fight for love, as men may do;
We should be woo'd, and were not made to woo.
[*Exit Dem.*
I 'll follow thee, and make a heaven of hell,
To die upon the hand I love so well. [*Exit.*
Obe. Fare thee well, nymph: ere he do leave this grove,
Thou shalt fly him, and he shall seek thy love.

231. *"Daphne holds the chase";* the story tells how Apollo pursued Daphne, who was changed into a laurel-tree as he reached her. —I. G.

Re-enter Puck.

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

Puck. Aye, there it is.

Obe. I pray thee, give it me.
I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows;
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine:
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight;
And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in:
And with the juice of this I 'll streak her eyes,
And make her full of hateful fantasies.
Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove:
A sweet Athenian lady is in love
With a disdainful youth: anoint his eyes;
But do it when the next thing he espies
May be the lady: thou shalt know the man
By the Athenian garments he hath on.
Effect it with some care that he may prove
More fond on her than she upon her love:
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

Puck. Fear not, my lord, your servant shall do so.

[*Exeunt.*

Scene II

Another part of the wood.

Enter Titania, with her train.

Tita. Come, now a roundel and a fairy song;
Then, for the third part of a minute, hence;
Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds;
Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings,
To make my small elves coats; and some keep back
The clamorous owl, that nightly hoots and wonders
At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep;
Then to you offices, and let me rest.

Song.

Fir. Fairy. You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong,
Come not near our fairy queen.

Chorus.

Philomel, with melody,
Sing in our sweet lullaby;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby:
Never harm,
Nor spell, nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh;
So, good night, with lullaby.

Fir. Fairy. Weaving spiders, come not here;
Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence!
Beetles black, approach not near;
Worm nor snail, do no offense.

Chorus.

Philomel, with melody, etc.

Sec. Fairy. Hence, away! now all is well:
One aloof stand sentinel.
[*Exeunt Fairies. Titania sleeps.*

Enter Oberon, and squeezes the flower on Titania's eyelids.

Obe. What thou seest when thou dost wake,
Do it for thy true-love take;
Love and languish for his sake:
Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,
Pard, or boar with bristled hair,
In thy eye that shall appear
When thou wakest, it is thy dear:
Wake when some vile thing is near.
[*Exit.*

Enter Lysander and Hermia.

Lys. Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood;
And to speak troth, I have forgot our way:
We 'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,
And tarry for the comfort of the day.

Her. Be it so, Lysander: find you out a bed;
For I upon this bank will rest my head.

Lys. One turf shall serve as pillow for us both;
One heart, one bed, two bosoms, and one troth.
Her. Nay, good Lysander; for my sake, my dear,
Lie further off yet, do not lie so near.
Lys. O, take the sense, sweet, of my innocence!
Love takes the meaning in love's conference.
I mean, that my heart unto yours is knit,
So that but one heart we can make of it:
Two bosoms interchained with an oath;
So then two bosoms and a single troth.
Then by your side no bed-room me deny;
For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.
Her. Lysander riddles very prettily:
Now much beshrew my manners and my pride,
If Hermia meant to say Lysander lied.
But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy
Lie further off; in human modesty,
Such separation as may well be said
Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid,
So far be distant: and, good night, sweet friend:
Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end!
Lys. Amen, amen, to that fair prayer, say I;
And then end life when I end loyalty!
Here is my bed: sleep give thee all his rest!
Her. With half that wish the wisher's eyes be press'd! [*They sleep.*

45. That is, understand *the meaning of my innocence,* or my *innocent meaning.* Let no suspicion of ill enter thy mind. In the conversation of those who are assured of each other's kindness, not *suspicion* but *love takes the meaning.*—H. N. H.

Enter Puck.

Puck. Through the forest have I gone,
But Athenian found I none,
On whose eyes I might approve
This flower's force in stirring love.
Night and silence.—Who is here?
Weeds of Athens he doth wear:
This is he, my master said,
Despised the Athenian maid;
And here the maiden, sleeping sound,
On the dank and dirty ground.
Pretty soul! she durst not lie
Near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy.
Churl, upon thy eyes I throw
All the power this charm doth owe.
When thou wakest, let love forbid
Sleep his seat on thy eyelid:
So awake when I am gone;
For I must now to Oberon. [*Exit.*

Enter Demetrius and Helena, running.

Hel. Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.
Dem. I charge thee, hence, and do not haunt me thus.
Hel. O, wilt thou darkling leave me? do not so.
Dem. Stay, on thy peril: I alone will go. [*Exit.*
Hel. O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!
The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.
Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies;
For she hath blessed and attractive eyes.

How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears:
If so, my eyes are oftener wash'd than hers.
No, no, I am as ugly as a bear;
For beasts that meet me run away for fear:
Therefore no marvel though Demetrius
Do, as a monster, fly my presence thus.
What wicked and dissembling glass of mine
Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne?
But who is here? Lysander! on the ground!
Dead? or asleep? I see no blood, no wound.
Lysander, if you live, good sir, awake.
Lys. [*Awaking*] And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake.
Transparent Helena! Nature shews art,
That though thy bosom makes me see thy heart.
Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word
Is that vile name to perish on my sword!
Hel. Do not say so, Lysander; say not so.
What though he love your Hermia? Lord, what though?
Yet Hermia still loves you: then be content.
Lys. Content with Hermia! No; I do repent
The tedious minutes I with her have spent.
Not Hermia but Helena I love:
Who will not change a raven for a dove?
The will of man is by his reason sway'd
And reason says you are the worthier maid.

116. Though this play be but a dream, Lysander shows a good deal of human nature, as it is when awake, or claiming to be so, in thus attributing to riper reason a change wrought in his vision by enchantment. The bewitching juice only develops a "higher law" in him. And in like sort it often happens that men, mistak-

Things growing are not ripe until their season:
So, I being young, till now ripe not to reason;
And touching now the point of human skill,
Reason becomes the marshal to my will,
And leads me to your eyes; where I o'erlook
Love's stories, written in love's richest book.
Hel. Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born?
When at your hands did I deserve this scorn?
Is 't not enough, is 't not enough, young man,
That I did never, no, nor never can,
Deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye,
But you must flout my insufficiency?
Good troth, you do me wrong, good sooth, you do,
In such disdainful manner me to woo.
But fare you well: perforce I must confess
I thought you lord of more true gentleness.
O, that a lady, of one man refused,
Should of another therefore be abused! [*Exit.*
Lys. She sees not Hermia. Hermia, sleep thou there:
And never mayst thou come Lysander near!
For as a surfeit of the sweetest things
The deepest loathing to the stomach brings,
Or as the heresies that men do leave
Are hated most of those they did deceive,
So thou, my surfeit and my heresy,
Of all be hated, but the most of me!

ing change for progress, grow the more opinionated for their frequent changes of opinion, thus turning the natural arguments of modesty into a basis of conceit.—H. N. H.

And, all my powers, address your love and
might
To honor Helen and to be her knight! [*Exit.*
Her. [*Awaking*] Help me, Lysander, help me!
do thy best
To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast!
Aye me, for pity! what a dream was here!
Lysander, look how I do quake with fear:
Methought a serpent eat my heart away,
And you sat smiling at his cruel prey.
Lysander! what, removed? Lysander! lord!
What, out of hearing? gone? no sound, no
word?
Alack, where are you? speak, an if you hear;
Speak, of all loves! I swoon almost with fear.
No? then I well perceive you are not nigh:
Either death or you I 'll find immediately.
[*Exit.*

ACT THIRD

Scene I

The wood. Titania lying asleep.

Enter Quince, Snug, Bottom, Flute, Snout, and Starveling.

Bot. Are we all met?

Quin. Pat, pat; and here 's a marvelous convenient place for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn-brake our tiring-house; and we will do it in action as we will do it before the duke.

Bot. Peter Quince,—

Quin. What sayest thou, Bully Bottom?

Bot. There are things in this comedy of Pyramus and Thisby that will never please. First, Pyramus must draw a sword to kill himself; which the ladies cannot abide. How answer you that?

Snout. By 'r lakin, a parlous fear.

Star. I believe we must leave the killing out, when all is done.

Bot. Not a whit: I have a device to make all well.

Write me a prologue; and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm

with our swords, and that Pyramus is not killed indeed; and, for the more better assurance, tell them that I Pyramus am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver: this will put them out of fear.

Quin. Well, we will have such a prologue; and it shall be written in eight and six.

Bot. No, make it two more; let it be written in eight and eight.

Snout. Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

Star. I fear it, I promise you.

Bot. Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves: to bring in,—God shield us!—a lion among ladies, is a most dreadful thing; for there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living: and we ought to look to 't.

Snout. Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

Bot. Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck; and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect,—'Ladies,'—or, 'Fair ladies,—I would wish you,'—or, 'I would request you,'—or, 'I would entreat you,—not to fear, not to tremble: my life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life: no, I am no such thing; I am a man as other

39–52. This was probably suggested by an actual incident which occurred during the Kenilworth festivities, when one Harry Goldingham, who was to represent Arion upon the Dolphin's back, tore off his disguise and swore he was none of Arion: (*cp.* Scott's use of this story in *Kenilworth*).—I. G.

men are:' and there indeed let him name his name, and tell them plainly, he is Snug the joiner.

Quin. Well, it shall be so. But there is two hard things; that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber; for, you know, Pyramus and Thisby meet by moonlight.

Snout. Doth the moon shine that night we play our play?

Bot. A calendar, a calendar! look in the almanac; find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

Quin. Yes, it doth shine that night.

Bot. Why then may you leave a casement of the great chamber window, where we play, open, and the moon may shine in at the casement.

Quin. Aye; or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lantern, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of moonshine. Then, there is another thing: we must have a wall in the great chamber; for Pyramus and Thisby, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

Snout. You can never bring in a wall. What say you, Bottom?

Bot. Some man or other must present wall: and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast about him, to signify wall; and let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper.

Quin. If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse

your parts. Pyramus, you begin: when you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake: and so every one according to his cue.

Enter Puck behind.

Puck. What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here,
So near the cradle of the fairy queen?
What, a play toward! I 'll be an auditor;
An actor too perhaps, if I see cause.

Quin. Speak, Pyramus. Thisby, stand forth.

Bot. Thisby, the flowers of odious savors sweet,—

Quin. Odors, odors.

Bot.—odors savors sweet:
So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisby dear.
But hark, a voice! stay thou but here awhile,
And by and by I will to thee appear. [*Exit.*

Puck. A stranger Pyramus than e'er play'd here. [*Exit.*

Flu. Must I speak now?

Quin. Aye, marry must you; for you must understand he goes but to see a noise that he heard, and is to come again.

Flu. Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,
Of color like the red rose on triumphant brier,
Most brisky juvenal, and eke most lovely Jew,
As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire,
I 'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.

Quin. 'Ninus' tomb,' man: why, you must not speak that yet; that you answer to Pyramus:

you speak all your part at once, cues and all. Pyramus enter: your cue is past; it is, 'never tire.'

Flu. O,—As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire.

Re-enter Puck, and Bottom with an ass's head.

Bot. If I were fair, Thisby, I were only thine.

Quin. O monstrous! O strange! we are haunted. Pray, masters! fly, masters! Help!

[*Exeunt Quince, Snug, Flute, Snout, and Starveling.*

Puck. I 'll follow you, I 'll lead you about a round,
Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier:
Sometime a horse I 'll be, sometime a hound,
A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire;
And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,
Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn.

[*Exit.*

Bot. Why do they run away? this is a knavery of them to make me afeard.

Re-enter Snout.

Snout. O Bottom, thou art changed! what do I see on thee?

Bot. What do you see? you see an ass-head of your own, do you? [*Exit Snout.*

Re-enter Quince.

Quin. Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated. [*Exit.*

Bot. I see their knavery: this is to make an ass of me; to fright me, if they could. But I will not stir from this place, do what they can: I will walk up and down here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid. [*Sings.*

The ousel cock so black of hue,
With orange-tawny bill,
The throstle with his note so true,
The wren with little quill;

Tita. [*Awaking*] What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

Bot. [*Sings*]

The finch, the sparrow, and the lark,
The plain-song cuckoo gray,
Whose note full many a man doth mark,
And dares not answer nay;—

135. In the opinion of some commentators, the Poet or Bottom is a little out here in his ornithology. This opinion has probably arisen from a change in the use of the name since Shakespeare's day; *ousel* being then used to denote the *blackbird,* as is evident from the Thirteenth Song of Drayton's *Poly-Olbion:*

"The *woosel* near at hand, that hath a golden bill,
As nature him had mark'd of purpose t' let us see
That from all other birds his tunes should different be;
For with their vocal sounds they sing to pleasant May;
Upon his dulcet pipe the *merle* doth only play."

And in a note upon this passage he adds,—"Of all birds the *blackbird* only whistleth"; thus showing that the *ousel,* the *merle* and the *blackbird* were all one. Bottom's *orange-tawney* bill accords with what Yarrell says of the blackbird: "The beak and the edges of the eyelids in the adult male are *gamboge yellow.*"—H. N. H.

141. The *"plain-song"* was used for the simple *air* or *ground* in music, to distinguish it from the tenor, which was called *mean,* and from the variations, which were called descant. The cuckoo is called *plain-song,* as having no variety of note, but singing in a monotone, after the manner of the ancient simple *chant.*—H. N. H.

for, indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish a bird? who would give a bird the lie, though he cry 'cuckoo' never so?

Tita. I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:
Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note;
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;
And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me
On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee.

Bot. Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that: and yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together now-a-days; the more the pity, that some honest neighbors will not make them friends. Nay, I can gleek upon occasion.

Tita. Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

Bot. Not so, neither: but if I had wit enough to get out of this wood, I have enough to serve mine own turn.

Tita. Out of this wood do not desire to go:
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.
I am a spirit of no common rate:
The summer still doth tend upon my state;
And I do love thee: therefore, go with me;
I 'll give thee fairies to attend on thee;
And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,
And sing, while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep:

157. *"Gleek";* Bottom is chuckling over the wit he has just vented. *Gleek* is from the Anglo-Saxon *glig,* and means *catch, entrap, play upon, scoff at.* So says Richardson. *Glee* is from the same original.—H. N. H.

And I will purge thy mortal grossness so,
That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.
Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Moth! and Mustard-seed!

Enter Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustardseed.

First Fai. Ready.
Sec. Fai. And I.
Third Fai. And I.
Fourth Fai. And I.
All. Where shall we go?
Tita. Be kind and courteous to this gentleman;
Hop in his walks, and gambol in his eyes;
Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries;
The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,
And for night-tapers crop their waxen thighs,
And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,
To have my love to bed and to arise;
And pluck the wings from painted butterflies,
To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes:
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.
First Fai. Hail, mortal!
Sec. Fai. Hail!
Third Fai. Hail!
Fourth Fai. Hail!

180. Dr. Johnson informs us, in a note upon this passage, that the glow-worm's light is in his tail, not his eyes. What a pity it is the Poet did not know this! as he might then have written,—"And light them at the fiery glow-worm's *tail.*"—H. N. H.

Bot. I cry your worships mercy, heartily: I beseech your worship's name.

Cob. Cobweb.

Bot. I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good Master Cobweb: if I cut my finger, I shall make bold with you. Your name, honest gentleman?

Peas. Peaseblossom.

Bot. I pray you, commend me to Mistress Squash, your mother, and to Master Peascod, your father. Good Master Peaseblossom, I shall desire you of more acquaintance too. Your name, I beseech you, sir?

Mus. Mustardseed.

Bot. Good Master Mustardseed, I know your patience well: that same cowardly, giant-like ox-beef hath devoured many a gentleman of your house: I promise you your kindred hath made my eyes water ere now. I desire your more acquaintance, good Master Mustardseed.

Tita. Come, wait upon him; lead him to my bower.
The moon methinks looks with a watery eye;
And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,
Lamenting some enforced chastity.
Tie up my love's tongue, bring him silently.

[*Exeunt.*

197. *"Squash," i. e.* an unripe peascod.—I. G.

203. *"Patience,"* that is, your patience is suffering "that same cowardly, giant-like ox-beef" to devour "many a gentleman of your house." Mason proposed to read,—"I know you *passing well";* but the proposal has been rejected on the ground that Bottom here intends a bit of irony on the supposed virtue of mustard in making the eaters choleric!—H. N. H.

Scene II

Another part of the wood.

Enter Oberon.

Obe. I wonder if Titania be awaked;
Then, what it was that next came in her eye,
Which she must dote on in extremity.

Enter Puck.

Here comes my messenger.
How now, mad spirit!
What night-rule now about this haunted grove?
Puck. My mistress with a monster is in love.
Near to her close and consecrated bower,
While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,
A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,
That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,
Were met together to rehearse a play,
Intended for great Theseus' nuptial-day.
The shallowest thick-skin of that barren sort,
Who Pyramus presented, in their sport
Forsook his scene, and enter'd in a brake:
When I did him at this advantage take,
An ass's nole I fixed on his head:
Anon his Thisbe must be answered,
And forth my mimic comes. When they him spy,
As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye,
Or russet-pated choughs, many in sort,
Rising and cawing at the gun's report,

Sever themselves and madly sweep the sky,
So, at his sight, away his fellows fly;
And, at our stamp, here o'er and o'er one falls;
He murder cries, and help from Athens calls.
Their sense thus weak, lost with their fears thus strong,
Made senseless things begin to do them wrong;
For briers and thorns at their apparel snatch;
Some sleeves, some hats, from yielders all things catch.
I led them on in this distracted fear,
And left sweet Pyramus translated there:
When in that moment, so it came to pass,
Titania waked, and straightway loved an ass.

Obe. This falls out better than I could devise.
But hast thou yet latch'd the Athenian's eyes
With a love-juice, as I did bid thee do?

Puck. I took him sleeping,—that is finish'd too,—
And the Athenian woman by his side;
That, when he waked, of force she must be eyed.

Enter Hermia and Demetrius.

Obe. Stand close: this is the same Athenian.

Puck. This is the woman, but not this the man.

Dem. O, why rebuke you him that loves you so?
Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe.

Her. Now I but chide; but I should use thee worse,
For thou, I fear, hast given me cause to curse.

36. *"latch'd";* the word *"latch"* in this passage, as Prof. Skeat has pointed out, is not connected with the ordinary *"latch,"* "to catch," but is etymologically the causal form of *"leak,"* and means "to cause to drop, to drip."—I. G.

If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,
Being o'er shoes in blood, plunge in the deep,
And kill me too.
The sun was not so true unto the day
As he to me: would he have stolen away
From sleeping Hermia? I 'll believe as soon
This whole earth may be bored, and that the moon
May through the center creep, and so displease
Her brother's noontide with the Antipodes.
It cannot be but thou hast murder'd him;
So should a murderer look, so dead, so grim.

Dem. So should the murder'd look; and so should I,
Pierced through the heart with your stern cruelty:
Yet you, the murderer, look as bright, as clear,
As yonder Venus in her glimmering sphere.

Her. What 's this to my Lysander? where is he?
Ah, good Demetrius, wilt thou give him me?

Dem. I had rather give his carcass to my hounds.

Her. Out, dog! out, cur! thou drivest me past the bounds
Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him, then?
Henceforth be never number'd among men!
O, once tell true, tell true, even for my sake!
Durst thou have look'd upon him being awake,
And hast thou kill'd him sleeping? O brave touch!

70. A *"touch"* anciently signified a *trick*. Ascham has—"The shrewd *touches* of many curst boys." And, in the old story of Howleglas,—"For at all times he did some mad *touch*."—H. N. H.

Could not a worm, an adder, do so much?
An adder did it; for with doubler tongue
Than thine, thou serpent, never adder stung.

Dem. You spend your passion on a misprised mood:
I am not guilty of Lysander's blood;
Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.

Her. I pray thee, tell me then that he is well.

Dem. An if I could, what should I get therefore?

Her. A privilege, never to see me more.
And from thy hated presence part I so:
See me no more, whether he be dead or no.

[*Exit.*

Dem. There is no following her in this fierce vein:
Here therefore for a while I will remain.
So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow
For debt that bankrupt sleep doth sorrow owe;
Which now in some slight measure it will pay,
If for his tender here I make some stay.

[*Lies down and sleeps.*

Obe. What hast thou done? thou hast mistaken quite,
And laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight:
Of thy misprision must perforce ensue
Some true love turn'd, and not a false turn'd true.

Puck. Then fate o'er-rules, that, one man holding troth,
A million fail, confounding oath on oath.

Obe. About the wood go swifter than the wind,
And Helena of Athens look thou find:

All fancy-sick she is and pale of cheer,
With sighs of love, that costs the fresh blood dear:
By some illusion see thou bring her here:
I'll charm his eyes against she do appear.

Puck. I go, I go; look how I go,
Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow. [*Exit.*

Obe. Flower of this purple dye,
Hit with Cupid's archery,
Sink in apple of his eye.
When his love he doth espy,
Let her shine as gloriously
As the Venus of the sky.
When thou wakest, if she be by,
Beg of her for remedy.

Re-enter Puck.

Puck. Captain of our fairy band,
Helena is here at hand;
And the youth, mistook by me,
Pleading for a lover's fee.
Shall we their fond pageant see?
Lord, what fools these mortals be!

Obe. Stand aside: the noise they make
Will cause Demetrius to awake.

Puck. Then will two at once woo one;
That must needs be sport alone;

96. *"Cheer"* is from the old French *chère,* which Cotgrave thus explains: "The face, visage, countenance, favour, looks, aspect." Hence it naturally came to mean that which *affects* the face, or gives it expression.—H. N. H.

119. *"sport alone," i. e.* "by itself, without anything else"; others render "alone" by "above all things, without a parallel."—I. G.

And those things do best please me
That befall preposterously.

Enter Lysander and Helena.

Lys. Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?
Scorn and derision never come in tears:
Look, when I vow, I weep; and vows so born,
In their nativity all truth appears.
How can these things in me seem scorn to you,
Bearing the badge of faith, to prove them true?
Hel. You do advance your cunning more and more.
When truth kills truth, O devilish-holy fray!
These vows are Hermia's: will you give her o'er?
Weigh oath with oath, and you will nothing weigh:
Your vows to her and me, put in two scales.
Will even weigh; and both as light as tales.
Lys. I had no judgment when to her I swore.
Hel. Nor none, in my mind, now you give her o'er.
Lys. Demetrius loves her, and he loves not you.
Dem. [*Awaking*] O Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!
To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?
Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show
Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow!

129. *"truth kills truth."* Lysander's present professions of good faith show his former ones to have been false, and thus destroy his pretension to have any good faith at all. An internecine war of "truths" is "devilish" in proportion as truth itself is "holy."—C. H. H.

That pure congealed white, high Taurus' snow,
Fann'd with the eastern wind, turns to a crow
When thou hold'st up thy hand: O, let me kiss
This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss!

Hel. O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent
To set against me for your merriment:
If you were civil and knew courtesy,
You would not do me thus much injury.
Can you not hate me, as I know you do,
But you must join in souls to mock me too?
If you were men, as men you are in show,
You would not use a gentle lady so;
To vow, and swear, and superpraise my parts,
When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.
You both are rivals, and love Hermia;
And now both rivals, to mock Helena:
A trim exploit, a manly enterprise,
To conjure tears up in a poor maid's eyes
With your derision! none of noble sort
Would so offend a virgin, and extort
A poor soul's patience, all to make you sport.

Lys. You are unkind, Demetrius; be not so;
For you love Hermia; this you know I know:
And here, with all good will, with all my heart,
In Hermia's love I yield you up my part;
And yours of Helena to me bequeath,
Whom I do love, and will do till my death.

Hel. Never did mockers waste more idle breath.

Dem. Lysander, keep thy Hermia; I will none:

144. *"princess of pure white."* Some editors have found difficulty in this phrase for Helena's hand; but it is quite in keeping with the hyperbolic mannerism of the whole speech.—C. H. H.

If e'er I loved her, all that love is gone.
My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourn'd,
And now to Helen is it home return'd,
There to remain.

Lys. Helen, it is not so.

Dem. Disparage not the faith thou dost not know,
Lest, to thy peril, thou aby it dear.
Look, where thy love comes; yonder is thy dear.

Re-enter Hermia.

Her. Dark night, that from the eye his function takes,
The ear more quick of apprehension makes;
Wherein it doth impair the seeing sense,
It pays the hearing double recompense.
Thou are not by mine eye, Lysander, found;
Mine ear, I thank it, brought me to thy sound.
But why unkindly didst thou leave me so?

Lys. Why should he stay, whom love doth press to go?

Her. What love could press Lysander from my side?

Lys. Lysander's love, that would not let him bide,
Fair Helena, who more engilds the night
Than all yon fiery oes and eyes of light.
Why seek'st thou me? could not this make thee know,
The hate I bare thee made me leave thee so?

Her. You speak not as you think: it cannot be.

188. *"oes"; o* was used for anything round, among other things for circular discs of metal used for ornaments, *cp.* Bacon, Essay xxxvii.: "And Oes, and Spangs, as they are of no great cost, so they are of most glory."—I. G.

Hel. Lo, she is one of this confederacy!
Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three
To fashion this false sport, in spite of me.
Injurious Hermia! most ungrateful maid!
Have you conspired, have you with these contrived
To bait me with this foul derision?
Is all the counsel that we two have shared,
The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us,—O, is all forgot?
All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence?
We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
Have with our needles created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
Both warbling of one song, both in one key;
As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds,
Had been incorporate. So we grew together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
But yet an union in partition;
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem;
So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart;
Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,
Due but to one, and crowned with one crest.

203. *"Artificial"* is here used for the worker in art, not the work; like its Latin original *artifex,* artist, or artificer.—H. N. H.

204. *"needles,"* a monosyllable; *"needle"* was often spelled *"neeld"* in Old English.—I. G.

212–214. "Helena says, 'we had two seeming bodies but one heart.' She then exemplifies her position by a simile—'we had two of the first, *i. e.* bodies, like the double coats in heraldry that belong to man and wife as one person, but which, like our single heart, have but one crest.'"—I. G.

And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
To join with men in scorning your poor friend?
It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly:
Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it,
Though I alone do feel the injury.

Her. I am amazed at your passionate words.
I scorn you not: it seems that you scorn me.

Hel. Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn,
To follow me and praise my eyes and face?
And made your other love, Demetrius,
Who even but now did spurn me with his foot,
To call me goddess, nymph, divine and rare,
Precious, celestial? Wherefore speaks he this
To her he hates? and wherefore doth Lysander
Deny your love, so rich within his soul,
And tender me, forsooth, affection,
But by your setting on, by your consent?
What though I be not so in grace as you,
So hung upon with love, so fortunate,
But miserable most, to love unloved?
This you should pity rather than despise.

Her. I understand not what you mean by this.

Hel. Aye, do, persever, counterfeit sad looks,
Make mouths upon me when I turn my back;
Wink each at other; hold the sweet jest up:
This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled.
If you have any pity, grace, or manners,
You would not make me such an argument.
But fare ye well: 'tis partly my own fault;
Which death or absence soon shall remedy.

Lys. Stay, gentle Helena; hear my excuse:
My love, my life, my soul, fair Helena!

Hel. O excellent!
Her. Sweet, do not scorn her so.
Dem. If she cannot entreat, I can compel.
Lys. Thou canst compel no more than she entreat:
Thy threats have no more strength than her weak prayers.
Helen, I love thee; by my life, I do:
I swear by that which I will lose for thee,
To prove him false that says I love thee not.
Dem. I say I love thee more than he can do.
Lys. If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.
Dem. Quick, come!
Her. Lysander, whereto tends all this?
Lys. Away, you Ethiope!
Dem. No, no; he'll . . .
Seem to break loose; take on as you would follow,
But yet come not: you are a tame man, go!
Lys. Hang off, thou cat, thou burr! vile thing, let loose,
Or I will shake the from me like a serpent!
Her. Why are you grown so rude? what change is this?
Sweet love,—
Lys. Thy love! out, tawny Tartar, out!

257. *"No no; he'll . . . seem"*; the first Quarto *"heele seem"*; the second *"hee'l seem"*; the first Folio *"No, no, Sir, seem."* The passage is clearly corrupt in the old editions. I am inclined to accept Mr. Orson's ingenious suggestion:—

"No no, sir; still
Seeme to breake loose,"

"heele" being an easy misreading of *"stille."*—I. G.

Out, loathed medicine! hated potion, hence!
Her. Do you not jest?
Hel. Yes, sooth; and so do you.
Lys. Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.
Dem. I would I had your bond, for I perceive
A weak bond holds you: I 'll not trust your word.
Lys. What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead?
Although I hate her, I 'll not harm her so.
Her. What, can you do me greater harm than hate?
Hate me! wherefore? O me! what news, my love!
Am not I Hermia? are not you Lysander?
I am as fair now as I was erewhile.
Since night you loved me; yet since night you left me:
Why, then you left me,—O, the gods forbid!—
In earnest, shall I say?
Lys. Aye, by my life;
And never did desire to see thee more.
Therefore be out of hope, of question, of doubt;
Be certain, nothing truer; 'tis no jest
That I do hate thee, and love Helena.
Her. O me! you juggler! you canker-blossom!
You thief of love! what, have you come by night
And stolen my love's heart from him?
Hel. Fine, i' faith!
Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,

282. The canker is a worm that preys on the leaves or buds of flowers, always beginning in the middle. So before, in this play: "Some to kill *cankers* in the musk-rose buds."—H. N. H.

No touch of bashfulness? What, will you tear
Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?
Fie, fie! you counterfeit, you puppet, you!
Her. Puppet? why so? aye, that way goes the game.
Now I perceive that she hath made compare
Between our statures; she hath urged her height;
And with her personage, her tall personage,
Her height, forsooth, she hath prevail'd with him.
And are you grown so high in his esteem,
Because I am so dwarfish and so low?
How low am I, thou painted maypole? speak;
How low am I? I am not yet so low
But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.
Hel. I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,
Let her not hurt me: I was never curst;
I have no gift at all in shrewishness;
I am a right maid for my cowardice:
Let her not strike me. You perhaps may think,
Because she is something lower than myself,
That I can match her.
Her. Lower! hark, again.
Hel. Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me,
I evermore did love you, Hermia,
Did ever keep your counsels, never wrong'd you;
Save that, in love unto Demetrius,
I told him of your stealth unto this wood.
He follow'd you; for love I follow'd him;
But he hath chid me hence, and threaten'd me
To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too:

And now, so you will let me quiet go,
To Athens will I bear my folly back,
And follow you no further: let me go:
You see how simple and how fond I am.

Her. Why, get you gone: who is 't that hinders you?

Hel. A foolish heart, that I leave here behind.

Her. What, with Lysander?

Hel. With Demetrius.

Lys. Be not afraid; she shall not harm thee, Helena.

Dem. No, sir, she shall not, though you take her part.

Hel. O, when she 's angry, she is keen and shrewd!
She was a vixen when she went to school;
And though she be but little, she is fierce.

Her. Little again! nothing but low and little!
Why will you suffer her to flout me thus?
Let me come to her.

Lys. Get you gone, you dwarf;
You minimus, of hindering knot-grass made;
You bead, you acorn.

Dem. You are too officious
In her behalf that scorns your services.
Let her alone: speak not of Helena;
Take not her part; for, if thou dost intend

329. *"Knot-grass,"* it seems, was anciently supposed to stop the growth of those to whom it was applied. Thus, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle,* Act. ii. sc. *2*: "The child's a fatherless child, and say they should put him into a strait pair of gaskins, 'twere worse than *knot-grass;* he would *never grow* after after it." "O, who can tell the hidden power of *herbs,* and might of magic spell!" Knot-grass is a low, creeping *herb.*—H. N. H.

Never so little show of love to her,
Thou shalt aby it.

Lys. Now she holds me not;
Now follow, if thou darest, to try whose right,
Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.

Dem. Follow! nay, I 'll go with thee, cheek by jole.
[*Exeunt Lysander and Demetrius.*

Her. You, mistress, all this coil is 'long of you;
Nay, go not back.

Hel. I will not trust you, I
No longer stay in your curst company.
Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray.
My legs are longer though, to run away. [*Exit.*

Her. I am amazed, and know not what to say.
[*Exit.*

Obe. This is thy negligence: still thou mistakest,
Or else committ'st thy knaveries willfully.

Puck. Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.
Did not you tell me I should know the man
By the Athenian garments he had on?
And so far blameless proves my enterprise,
That I have 'nointed an Athenian's eyes;
And so far am I glad it so did sort,
As this their jangling I esteem a sport.

Obe. Thou see'st these lovers seek a place to fight:
Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night;
The starry welkin cover thou anon
With drooping fog, as black as Acheron;
And lead these testy rivals so astray,
As one come not within another's way.
Like to Lysander sometime frame thy tongue,
Then stir Demetrius up with bitter wrong;

And sometime rail thou like Demetrius;
And from each other look thou lead them thus,
Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep
With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep:
Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye;
Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,
To take from thence all error with his might,
And make his eyeballs roll with wonted sight.
When they next wake, all this derision
Shall seem a dream and fruitless vision;
And back to Athens shall the lovers wend,
With league whose date till death shall never end.
Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,
I 'll to my queen and beg her Indian boy;
And then I will her charmed eye release
From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

Puck. My fairy lord, this must be done with haste,
For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,
And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger;
At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,
Troop home to churchyards: damned spirits all,

379. *"Swift dragons";* the chariot of Madam Night was anciently drawn by a team of dragons, that is, serpents, who were thought to be always awake, because they slept with their eyes open; and therefore were selected for this purpose. So, in *Cymbeline,* Act ii. sc. 2: "Swift, swift, ye *dragons* of the night." And in Milton's *Il Penseroso:*

"Smoothing the rugged brow of night,
While Cynthia checks her *dragon* yoke."—H. N. H.

That in crossways and floods have burial,
Already to their wormy beds are gone;
For fear lest day should look their shames upon,
They willfully themselves exile from light,
And must for aye consort with black-brow'd night.

Obe. But we are spirits of another sort:
I with the morning's love have oft made sport;
And, like a forester, the groves may tread,
Even till the eastern gate, all fiery-red,
Opening on Neptune with fair blessed beams,
Turns into yellow gold his salt green streams.
But, notwithstanding, haste; make no delay:
We may effect this business yet ere day. [*Exit.*

Puck. Up and down, up and down,
I will lead them up and down:
I am fear'd in field and town:
Goblin, lead them up and down.
Here comes one.

Re-enter Lysander.

Lys. Where art thou, proud Demetrius? speak thou now.

Puck. Here, villain; drawn and ready. Where art thou?

Lys. I will be with thee straight.

383. The ghosts of self-murderers, who are buried in cross-roads; and of those who being drowned were condemned (according to the opinion of the ancients) to wander for a hundred years, as the rites of sepulture had never been regularly bestowed on their bodies. See the fine passage in *Hamlet,* Act i. sc. 1: "I have heard, the cock, that is the trumpet of the morn," etc.—H. N. H.

389. *"morning's love";* Cephalus, the mighty hunter, and paramour of Aurora, was here probably meant.—H. N. H.

Puck. Follow me, then,
To plainer ground.
[*Exit Lysander, as following the voice.*

Re-enter Demetrius.

Dem. Lysander! speak again:
Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled?
Speak! In some bush? Where dost thou hide thy head?
Puck. Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,
Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,
And wilt not come? Come, recreant; come, thou child;
I 'll whip thee with a rod: he is defiled
That draws a sword on thee.
Dem. Yea, art thou there?
Puck. Follow my voice: we 'll try no manhood here.
[*Exeunt.*

Re-enter Lysander.

Lys. He goes before me and still dares me on:
When I come where he calls, then he is gone.
The villain is much lighter-heel'd than I:
I follow'd fast, but faster he did fly;
That fallen am I in dark uneven way,
And here will rest me. [*Lies down.*] Come, thou gentle day!
For if but once thou show me thy gray light,
I 'll find Demetrius, and revenge this spite.
[*Sleeps.*

Re-enter Puck and Demetrius.

Puck. Ho, ho, ho! Coward, why comest thou not?

Dem. Abide me, if thou darest; for well I wot
Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place,
And darest not stand, nor look me in the face.
Where art thou now?
Puck. Come hither: I am here.
Dem. Nay, then, thou mock'st me. Thou shalt buy this dear,
If ever I thy face by daylight see:
Now, go thy way. Faintness constraineth me
To measure out my length on this cold bed.
By day's approach look to be visited.
[*Lies down and sleeps.*

Re-enter Helena.

Hel. O weary night, O long and tedious night,
Abate thy hours! Shine comforts from the east,
That I may back to Athens by daylight,
From these that my poor company detest:
And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,
Steal me awhile from mine own company.
[*Lies down and sleeps.*

Puck. Yet but three? Come one more;
Two of both kinds makes up four.
Here she comes, curst and sad:
Cupid is a knavish lad,
Thus to make poor females mad.

Re-enter Hermia.

Her. Never so weary, never so in woe;
Bedabbled with the dew, and torn with briers;

I can no further crawl, no further go;
My legs can keep no pace with my desires.
Here will I rest me till the break of day.
Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray!
[*Lies down and sleeps.*

Puck. On the ground
Sleep sound:
I 'll apply
To your eye,
Gentle lover, remedy.
[*Squeezing the juice on Lysander's eye.*
When thou wakest,
Thou takest
True delight
In the sight
Of thy former lady's eye:
And the country proverb known,
That every man should take his own,
In your waking shall be shown:
Jack shall have Jill;
Nought shall go ill;
The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well. [*Exit.*

ACT FOURTH

Scene I

The same.

Lysander, Demetrius, Helena, and Hermia, lying asleep.

Enter Titania and Bottom; Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, Mustardseed, and other Fairies attending; Oberon behind unseen.

Tita. Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

Bot. Where 's Peaseblossom?

Peas. Ready.

Bot. Scratch my head, Peaseblossom. Where 's Mounsieur Cobweb?

Cob. Ready.

Bot. Mounsieur Cobweb, good mounsieur, get you your weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipped humble-bee on the top of a thistle; and, good mounsieur, bring me the honey-bag. Do not fret yourself too much in the action, mounsieur; and, good mounsieur, have a care the honey-bag break not;

I would be loth to have you overflown with a honey-bag, signior. Where 's Mounsieur Mustardseed.

Mus. Ready.

Bot. Give me your neaf, Mounsieur Mustardseed. Pray you leave your courtesy, good mounsieur.

Mus. What 's your will?

Bot. Nothing, good mounsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's, mounsieur; for methinks I am marvelous hairy about the face; and I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me, I must scratch.

Tita. What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?

Bot. I have a reasonable good ear in music. Let 's have the tongs and the bones.

Tita. Or say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.

Bot. Truly, a peck of provender: I could munch your good dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle of hay; good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow.

26. *"Cavalery Cobweb";* Grey says,—"Without doubt it should be cavalery Peas-blossom: as for cavalery Cobweb, he has just been despatched upon a perilous adventure." Of course Mr. Grey is right.—H. N. H.

33. *"a reasonable good ear in music";* weavers were supposed to be fond of music, more especially of psalm-singing; *cp. 1 Henry IV,* II. iv. *"I would were a weaver, I could sing psalms."*—I. G.

39. *"Bottle"* is an old word for *bundle,* from the French *boteau.* Richardson says,—"It is still common in the northern parts of England to call a truss or bundle of hay *a bottle."*—H. N. H.

Tita. I have a venturous fairy that shall seek
The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee new nuts.
Bot. I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas. But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me: I have an exposition of sleep come upon me.
Tita. Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.
Fairies, be gone, and be all ways away.
[*Exeunt Fairies.*
So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle 50
Gently entwist; the female ivy so.
Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.
O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee!
[*They sleep.*

Enter Puck.

Obe. [*Advancing*] Welcome, good Robin. See'st thou this sweet sight?
Her dotage now I do begin to pity:
For, meeting her of late behind the wood,
Seeking sweet favors for this hateful fool,

50. *"So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle";* commonly *"woodbine"* is identical with *"honeysuckle,"* but it is also used by Elizabethans for "convolvulus" and "ivy." Shakespeare, however, uses the word in two other passages in the sense of "honeysuckle"; hence Warburton suggested:—

> "So doth the woodbine, the sweet honeysuckle,
> Gently entwist the maple, ivy so," &c.

Johnson thought that *"woodbine"* was the plant, and *"honeysuckle"* the flower. These suggestions are not satisfactory: the simplest way out of the difficulty is to take "woodbine" as equivalent to convolvulus" or "bindweed"; *cp.* Ben Jonson's *Vision of Delight*:—

> "behold!
> How the blue bindweed doth itself unfold
> With honeysuckle."—I. G.

I did upbraid her, and fall out with her;
For she his hairy temples then had rounded
With coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers;
And that same dew, which sometime on the buds
Was wont to swell, like round and orient pearls,
Stood now within the pretty flowerets' eyes,
Like tears, that did their own disgrace bewail.
When I had at my pleasure taunted her,
And she in mild terms begg'd my patience,
I then did ask of her her changeling child;
Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent
To bear him to my bower in fairy land.
And now I have the boy, I will undo
This hateful imperfection of her eyes:
And, gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp
From off the head of this Athenian swain;
That, he awaking when the other do,
May all to Athens back again repair,
And think no more of this night's accidents,
But as the fierce vexation of a dream.
But first I will release the fairy queen.
Be as thou wast wont to be;
See as thou wast wont to see:
Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower
Hath such force and blessed power.
Now, my Titania; wake you, my sweet queen.

Tita. My Oberon! what visions have I seen!
Methought I was enamor'd of an ass.

81. *"Dian's bud";* it has been thought that perhaps *"Dian's bud"*= "Diana's rose," "the rose of England's Virgin Queen"; *"Diana's Rose"* is actually used in this complimentary sense in Greene's *Friar Bacon.*—I. G.

Obe. There lies your love.
Tita. How came these things to pass?
O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!
Obe. Silence awhile. Robin, take off this head.
Titania, music call; and strike more dead
Than common sleep of all these five the sense.
Tita. Music, ho! music, such as charmeth sleep!
[*Music, still.*
Puck. Now, when thou wakest, with thine own fool's eyes peep.
Obe. Sound, music! Come, my queen take hands with me,
And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.
Now thou and I are new in amity,
And will to-morrow midnight solemnly
Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly,
And bless it to all fair prosperity:
There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be
Wedded, with Theseus, all in jollity.
Puck. Fairy king, attend, and mark:
I do hear the morning lark.
Obe. Then, my queen, in silence sad,
Trip we after night's shade:
We the globe can compass soon,
Swifter than the wandering moon.
Tita. Come, my lord; and in our flight,
Tell me how it came this night,

91. *"Than common sleep,"* &c.; the Quartos and first two Folios read *"sleepe: of all these, fine the sense";* the correction is Theobald's.—I. G.

99. *"prosperity";* so the first Quarto; the second and Folios *"posterity."*—I. G.

That I sleeping here was found
With these mortals on the ground.

[*Exeunt.*

[*Horns winded within.*

Enter Theseus, Hippolyta, Egeus, and train.

The. Go, one of you, find out the forester;
For now our observation is perform'd;
And since we have the vaward of the day,
My love shall hear the music of my hounds.
Uncouple in the western valley; let them go:
Dispatch, I say, and find the forester.

[*Exit an Attend.*

We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top,
And mark the musical confusion
Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

Hip. I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear
With hounds of Sparta: never did I hear
Such gallant chiding; for, besides the groves,
The skies, the fountains, every region near
Seem'd all one mutual cry: I never heard
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

The. My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
So flew'd, so sanded; and their heads are hung
With ears that sweep away the morning dew;
Crook-knee'd, and dew-lapp'd like Thessalian bulls;
Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,
Each under each. A cry more tuneable

125. *"fountains"*; perhaps an error for *"mountains."*—I. G.

Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn,
In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly:
Judge when you hear. But, soft! what nymphs are these?

Ege. My lord, this is my daughter here asleep;
And this, Lysander; this Demetrius is;
This Helena, old Nedar's Helena:
I wonder of their being here together.

The. No doubt they rose up early to observe
The rite of May; and, hearing our intent,
Came here in grace of our solemnity.
But speak, Egeus; is not this the day
That Hermia should give answer of her choice?

Ege. It is, my lord.

The. Go, bid the huntsmen awake them with their horns.

[*Horns and shout within. Lys., Dem., Hel., and Her., wake and start up.*

Good morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past:
Begin these wood-birds but to couple now?

Lys. Pardon, my lord.

The. I pray you all, stand up.
I know you two are rival enemies:
How comes this gentle concord in the world,
That hatred is so far from jealousy,
To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity?

Lys. My lord, I shall reply amazedly,
Half sleep, half waking: but as yet, I swear,
I cannot truly say how I came here;
But, as I think,—for truly would I speak,
And now I do bethink me, so it is,—

I came with Hermia hither: our intent
Was to be gone from Athens, where we might,
Without the peril of the Athenian law.

Ege. Enough, enough, my lord; you have enough:
I beg the law, the law, upon his head.
They would have stolen away; they would, Demetrius,
Thereby to have defeated you and me,
You of your wife and me of my consent,
Of my consent that she should be your wife.

Dem. My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,
Of this their purpose hither to this wood;
And I in fury hither follow'd them,
Fair Helena in fancy following me.
But, my good lord, I wot not by what power,—
But by some power it is,—my love to Hermia,
Melted as the snow, seems to me now
As the remembrance of an idle gaud,
Which in my childhood I did dote upon;
And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,
The object and the pleasure of mine eye,
Is only Helena. To her, my lord,
Was I betroth'd ere I saw Hermia:
But, like in sickness, did I loathe this food;
But, as in health, come to my natural taste,
Now I do wish it, love it, long for it,
And will for evermore be true to it.

The. Fair lovers, you are fortunately met:
Of this discourse we more will hear anon.
Egeus, I will overbear your will;
For in the temple, by and by, with us
These couples shall eternally be knit:

And, for the morning now is something worn,
Our purposed hunting shall be set aside.
Away with us to Athens! three and three,
We 'll hold a feast in great solemnity.
Come, Hippolyta.

[*Exeunt The., Hip., and train.*

Dem. These things seem small and undistinguishable,
Like far-off mountains turned into clouds.

Her. Methinks I see these things with parted eye,
When every thing seems double.

Hel. So methinks:
And I have found Demetrius like a jewel,
Mine own, and not mine own.

Dem. Are you sure
That we are awake? It seems to me
That yet we sleep, we dream. Do not you think
The Duke was here, and bid us follow him?

Her. Yea; and my father.

Hel. And Hippolyta.

Lys. And he did bid us follow to the temple.

Dem. Why, then, we are awake: let 's follow him;
And by the way let us recount our dreams.

[*Exeunt.*

Bot. [*Awaking*] When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer: my next is, 'Most fair Pyramus.' Heigh-ho! Peter Quince! Flute, the bellows-mender! Snout, the tinker! Starveling! God 's my life, stolen hence, and left me asleep! I have had a

202. That is, as the jewel which one finds is his own and not his own; his own unless the loser claim it.—H. N. H.

most rare vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of a man to say what dream it was: man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was—there is no man can tell what. Methought I was,—and methought I had,—but man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream: it shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom; and I will sing it in the latter end of a play, before the Duke: peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death. [*Exit.*

Scene II

Athens. Quince's house.

Enter Quince, Flute, Snout, and Starveling.

Quin. Have you sent to Bottom's house? is he come home yet?

Star. He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt he is transported.

235. *"Her death,"* that is, at Thisbe's death, Bottom's head being full of the part he is going to play. Theobald could not imagine what *her* meant, and therefore proposed *after death.*—H. N. H.

Flu. If he come not, then the play is marred: it goes not forward, doth it?

Quin. It is not possible: you have not a man in all Athens able to discharge Pyramus but he.

Flu. No, he hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens.

Quin. Yea, and the best person too; and he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

Flu. You must say 'paragon': a paramour is, God bless us, a thing of naught.

Enter Snug.

Snug. Masters, the Duke is coming from the temple, and there is two or three lords and ladies more married: if our sport had gone forward, we had all been made men.

Flu. O sweet bully Bottom! Thus hath he lost sixpence a day during his life; he could not have scaped sixpence a day: an the Duke had not given him sixpence a day for playing Pyramus, I 'll be hanged; he would have deserved it: sixpence a day in Pyramus, or nothing.

Enter Bottom.

Bot. Where are these lads? where are these hearts?

Quin. Bottom! O most courageous day! O most happy hour!

Bot. Masters, I am to discourse wonders: but ask me not what; for if I tell you, I am no true Athenian. I will tell you every thing, right as it fell out.

Quin. Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

Bot. Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is, that the Duke hath dined. Get your apparel together, good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps; meet presently at the palace; every man look o'er his part; for the short and the long is, our play is preferred. In any case, let Thisby have clean linen; and let not him that plays the lion pare his nails, for they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And, most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath; and I do not doubt but to hear them say, it is a sweet comedy. No more words: away! go, away! [*Exeunt.*

41. *"preferred,"* handed in to the "manager of mirth" to be included in his list of sports ripe for performance. This was, for Bottom, equivalent to its acceptance.—C. H. H.

ACT FIFTH

Scene I

Athens. The palace of Theseus.

Enter Theseus, Hippolyta, Philostrate, Lords, and Attendants.

Hip. 'Tis strange, my Thesus, that these lovers speak of.

The. More strange than true: I never may believe
These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends.
The lunatic, the lover and the poet
Are of imagination all compact:
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,
That is, the madman: the lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.
Such tricks hath strong imagination,
That, if it would but apprehend some joy,

It comprehends some bringer of that joy;
Or in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush supposed a bear!

Hip. But all the story of the night told over,
And all their minds transfigured so together,
More witnesseth than fancy's images,
And grows to something of great constancy;
But, howsoever, strange and admirable.

The. Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.

Enter Lysander, Demetrius, Hermia, and Helena.

Joy, gentle friends! joy and fresh days of love
Accompany your hearts!

Lys. More than to us
Wait in your royal walks, your board, your bed!

The. Come now; what masques, what dances shall we have,
To wear away this long age of three hours
Between our after-supper and bed-time?
Where is our usual manager of mirth?
What revels are in hand? Is there no play,
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour?
Call Philostrate.

Phil. Here, mighty Theseus.

The. Say, what abridgment have you for this evening?
What masque? what music? How shall we beguile
The lazy time, if not with some delight?

Phil. There is a brief how many sports are ripe:
Make choice of which your highness will see first.

[*Giving a paper.*

The. [*reads*] The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung
By an Athenian eunuch to the harp.
We 'll none of that: that have I told my love,
In glory of my kinsman Hercules.
[*Reads*] The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals,
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.
That is an old device; and it was play'd
When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.
[*Reads*] The thrice three Muses mourning for the death
Of Learning, late deceased in beggary.
That is some satire, keen and critical,
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.
[*Reads*] A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus
And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth.
Merry and tragical! tedious and brief!
That is, hot ice and wondrous strange snow.
How shall we find the concord of this discord?
Phil. A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,

47. *"my kinsman Hercules"; cp.* North's *Plutarch, Life of Theseus:* "they (Theseus and Hercules) were near kinsmen, being cousins removed by the mother's side."—I. G.

54. *"critical," i. e.* "censorious," as in the well-known utterance of Iago, *"I am nothing, if not critical"* (*Othello,* II. i.).—I. G.

59. *"wondrous strange snow"; "strange"* is hardly the epithet one would expect, and various emendations have been suggested:—*"strange black," "strong snow," "swarthy snow," "sable-snow," "and, wondrous strange! yet snow."* Perhaps the most plausible conjecture is Mr. S. W. Orson's *"wondrous flaming snow," cp.* "What strange fits be these, Philautus, that burne thee with such a heat, that thou shakest for cold, and all thy body in a shivering sweat, in *a flaming ice,* melteth like wax and hardeneth like the adamant" (Lyly's *Euphues,* ed. Arber, p. 311).—I. G.

Which, is as brief as I have known a play;
But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,
Which makes it tedious; for in all the play
There is not one word apt, one player fitted:
And tragical, my noble lord, it is;
For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.
Which, when I saw rehearsed, I must confess,
Made mine eyes water; but more merry tears
The passion of loud laughter never shed.

The. What are they that do play it?

Phil. Hard-handed men, that work in Athens here,
Which never labor'd in their minds till now;
And now have toil'd their unbreathed memories
With this same play, against your nuptial.

The. And we will hear it.

Phil. No, my noble lord;
It is not for you: I have heard it over,
And it is nothing, nothing in the world;
Unless you can find sport in their intents,
Extremely stretch'd and conn'd with cruel pain,
To do you service.

The. I will hear that play;
For never any thing can be amiss,
When simpleness and duty tender it.
Go, bring them in: and take your places, ladies.
[*Exit Philostrate.*

Hip. I love not to see wretchedness o'ercharged,
And duty in his service perishing.

The. Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such thing.

Hip. He says they can do nothing in this kind.

The. The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.
Our sport shall be to take what they mistake:
And what poor duty cannot do, noble respect
Takes it in might, not merit.
Where I have come, great clerks have purposed
To greet me with premeditated welcomes;
Where I have seen them shiver and look pale,
Make periods in the midst of sentences,
Throttle their practiced accent in their fears,
And, in conclusion, dumbly have broke off,
Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,
Out of this silence yet I picked a welcome;
And in the modesty of fearful duty
I read as much as from the rattling tongue
Of saucy and audacious eloquence.
Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity
In least speak most, to my capacity.

Re-enter Philostrate.

Phil. So please your grace, the Prologue is address'd.

The. Let him approach. [*Flourish of trumpets.*

Enter Quince for the Prologue.

91. *"And what poor duty,"* &c.; Coleridge proposed:—

"And what poor duty cannot do, yet would,
Noble respect takes it," &c.

The meter is defective as the lines stand. Theobald read *"poor willing duty . . . Noble respect."* The meaning is sufficiently clear, and recalls *Love's Labor's Lost,* V. ii., *"That sport best pleases that doth least know how,"* &c. *Takes it in might* = regards the ability or effort of the performance.—I. G.

Pro. If we offend, it is with our good will.
That you should think, we come not to offend,
But with good will. To show our simple skill,
That is the true beginning of our end.
Consider, then, we come but in despite.
We do not come, as minding to content you,
Our true intent is. All for your delight,
We are not here. That you should here repent you,
The actors are at hand; and, by their show,
You shall know all, that you are like to know.

The. This fellow doth not stand upon points.

Lys. He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt; he knows not the stop. A good moral, my lord: it is not enough to speak, but to speak true.

Hip. Indeed he hath played on his prologue like a child on a recorder; a sound, but not in government.

The. His speech was like a tangled chain; nothing impaired, but all disordered. Who is next?

Enter Pyramus and Thisbe, Wall, Moonshine, and Lion.

Pro. Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show;
But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.
This man is Pyramus, if you would know;
This beauteous lady Thisby is certain.

118. *"stand upon points";* Quince's punctuation reminds one of the reading of Roister Doister's letter to Mistress Constance in the old comedy (*cp. Roister Doister,* iii. 3).—I. G.

This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present
Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder;
And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content
To whisper. At the which let no man wonder.
This man, with lanthorn, dog, and bush of thorn,
Presenteth Moonshine; for, if you will know,
By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn
To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.
This grisly beast, which Lion hight by name,
The trusty Thisby, coming first by night,
Did scare away, or rather did affright;
And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,
Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.
Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,
And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain:
Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,
He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast:
And Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,
His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,
Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain
At large discourse, while here they do remain.

[*Exeunt Prologue, Pyramus, Thisbe, Lion, and Moonshine.*

141. *"name";* as there is no rhyme to *name,* the loss of a line is to be inferred, or perhaps we should read *"which by name Lion hight."*—I. G.

The. I wonder if the lion be to speak.
Dem. No wonder, my lord: one lion may, when many asses do.
Wall. In this same interlude it doth befall
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;
And such a wall, as I would have you think,
That had in it a crannied hole or chink,
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,
Did whisper often very secretly.
This loam, this rough-cast, and this stone, doth show
That I am that same wall; the truth is so:
And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.
The. Would you desire lime and hair to speak better?
Dem. It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard discourse, my lord.
The. Pyramus draws near the wall: silence!

Re-enter Pyramus.

Pyr. O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!
O night, which ever art when day is not!

169. Some commentator has expressed the odd fancy, that *partition* here refers to the many-headed sermons which the Puritans were so zealous to reform into the place of the Scriptures and the *Book of Common Prayer;* and which Jeremy Taylor had in his eye, something more than fifty years later, when he got himself imprisoned for writing,—"The people have fallen under the saws and harrows of impertinent and ignorant preachers, who think all religion is a sermon, and pray, that they may be thought able to talk, but not to hold their peace."—H. N. H.

O night, O night! alack, alack, alack,
I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot!
And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,
That stand'st between her father's ground and mine!
Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,
Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne! [*Wall holds up his fingers.*
Thanks, courteous wall: Jove shield thee well for this! 180
But what see I? No Thisby do I see.
O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!
Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

The. The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse again.

Pyr. No, in truth, sir, he should not. 'Deceiving me' is Thisby's cue: she is to enter now, and I am to spy her through the wall. You shall see, it will fall pat as I told you. Yonder she comes. 190

Re-enter Thisbe.

This. O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!
My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones,
Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

Pyr. I see a voice: now will I to the chink,
To spy an I can hear my Thisby's face.
Thisby!

This. My love thou art, my love I think.

Pyr. Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;

And, like Limander, am I trusty still.

This. And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

Pyr. Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

This. As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

Pyr. O, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

This. I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

Pyr. Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

This. 'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.

[*Exeunt Pyramus and Thisbe.*

Wall. Thus have I, wall, my part discharged so;
And, being done, thus wall away doth go.

[*Exit.*

The. Now is the mural down between the two neighbors.

Dem. No remedy, my lord, when walls are so willful to hear without warning.

Hip. This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

The. The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.

Hip. It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

The. If we imagine no worse of them than they of themselves, they may pass for excellent men. Here come two noble beasts in, a man and a lion.

200. *"Limander"* and *"Helen,"* blunderingly for Leander and Hero, as *"Shafalus"* and *"Procrus"* for Cephalus and Procris.—H. N. H.

210. *"mural down";* the Quartos read *"Moon used";* the Folios *"morall downe";* the emendation *"mural"* was due to Pope.—I. G.

Re-enter Lion and Moonshine.

Lion. You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,
May now perchance both quake and tremble here,
When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar,
Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am
A lion-fell, nor else no lion's dam;
For, if I should as lion come in strife
Into this place, 'twere pity on my life.

The. A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.

Dem. The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw.

Lys. This lion is a very fox for his valor.

The. True; and a goose for his discretion.

Dem. Not so, my lord; for his valor cannot carry his discretion; and the fox carries the goose.

227. *"a lion-fell";* the Quartos read *"a lion fell," i. e.* a fierce lion, but Snug wishes to say "he is not a lion," wherefore the words have been hyphened by most modern editors, "lion-fell," *i. e.* "a lion's skin." Johnson understood *"neither"* before *"a lion fell";* Rowe read *"No lion fell."* There is, I think, a more obvious emendation, and I propose:—

> "Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, n'am
> A lion fell, nor else no lion's dam,"

"n'am" being an archaic form, like *nill* (*i. e.* ne will). In Gascoigne's *Steele Glas* the following couplet occurs, remarkably suggestive of our text:—

> "I n'am a man, as some do think I am;
> (Laugh not good lord), I am indede a dame."—I. G.

The. His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry his valor; for the goose carries not the fox. It is well: leave it to his discretion, and let us listen to the moon.

Moon. This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;—

Dem. He should have worn the horns on his head.

The. He is no crescent, and his horns are invisible within the circumference.

Moon. This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;
Myself the man i' the moon do seem to be.

The. This is the greatest error of all the rest: the man should be put into the lantern. How is it else the man i' the moon?

Dem. He dares not come there for the candle; for, you see, it is already in snuff.

Hip. I am aweary of this moon: would he would change!

The. It appears, by his small light of discretion, that he is in the wane; but yet, in courtesy, in all reason, we must stay the time.

Lys. Proceed, Moon.

Moon. All that I have to say, is, to tell you that the lanthorn is the moon; I, the man i' the moon; this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this dog, my dog.

Dem. Why, all these should be in the lantern; for all these are in the moon. But, silence! here comes Thisbe.

Re-enter Thisbe.

This. This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love?
Lion. [*Roaring*] Oh—— [*Thisbe runs off.*
Dem. Well roared, Lion.
The. Well run, Thisbe.
Hip. Well shone, Moon. Truly, the moon shines with a good grace.
[*The Lion shakes Thisbe's mantle, and exit.*
The. Well moused, Lion.
Dem. And then came Pyramus.
Lys. And so the lion vanished.

Re-enter Pyramus.

Pyr. Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;
I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright;
For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,
I trust to take of truest Thisby sight.
But stay, O spite!
But mark, poor knight,
What dreadful dole is here!
Eyes, do you see?
How can it be?
O dainty duck! O dear!
Thy mantle good,
What, stain'd with blood!

281, 282. Spedding proposed to invert these lines.—I. G.
285. *"gleams"*; the Quartos and Folio 1 read *"beams"*; Folio 2 *"streams."*—I. G.

Approach, ye Furies fell!
O Fates, come, come,
Cut thread and thrum;
Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!

The. This passion, and the death of a dear friend, would go near to make a man look sad.

Hip. Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

Pyr. O wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?
Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear;
Which is—no, no—which was the fairest dame
That lived, that loved, that liked, that look'd with cheer.
Come, tears, confound;
Out, sword, and wound
The pap of Pyramus;
Ay, that left pap,
Where heart doth hop: [*Stabs himself.*
Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.
Now am I dead,
Now am I fled;
My soul is in the sky:
Tongue, lose thy light;
Moon, take thy flight: [*Exit Moonshine.*
Now die, die, die, die, die. [*Dies.*

Dem. No die, but an ace, for him; for he is but one.

Lys. Less than an ace, man; for he is dead; he is nothing.

The. With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover, and prove an ass.

Hip. How chance Moonshine is gone before Thisbe comes back and finds her lover?

The. She will find him by starlight. Here she comes; and her passion ends the play.

Re-enter Thisbe.

Hip. Methinks she should not use a long one for such a Pyramus: I hope she will be brief.

Dem. A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which Thisbe, is the better; he for a man, God warrant us; she for a woman, God bless us.

Lys. She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

Dem. And thus she means, videlicet:—

This. Asleep, my love?
What, dead, my dove?
O Pyramus, arise!
Speak, speak. Quite dumb?
Dead, dead? A tomb
Must cover thy sweet eyes.
These lily lips,
This cherry nose,
These yellow cowslip cheeks,
Are gone, are gone:
Lovers, make moan:

334–336. *"he for a man—God bless us,"* omitted in the Folios, probably in consequence of the statute of James I forbidding profane speaking, or use of "the holy name of God."—I. G.

339. *"means,"* changed by Theobald to *"moans." "Mean"* in the sense of "to lament," an archaic form, is really more correct than "moan," and probably intentionally used by Shakespeare to harmonize with the archaisms of the interlude.—I. G.

His eyes were green as leeks.
O Sisters Three,
Come, come to me,
With hands as pale as milk:
Lay them in gore,
Since you have shore
With shears his thread of silk.
Tongue, not a word:
Come, trusty sword;
Come, blade, my breast imbrue: [*Stabs herself.*
And, farewell, friends;
Thus Thisbe ends:
Adieu, adieu, adieu. [*Dies.*

The. Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

Dem. Ay, and Wall too.

Bot. [*Starting up*] No, I assure you; the wall is down that parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance between two of our company?

The. No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no excuse. Never excuse; for when the players are all dead, there need none to be blamed. Marry, if he that writ it had played Pyramus and hanged himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy: and so it is, truly; and very notably discharged. But, come, your Bergomask: let your epilogue alone. [*A dance.*

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve:
Lovers, to bed; 'tis almost fairy time.
I fear we shall out-sleep the coming morn,
As much as we this night have overwatch'd.
This palpable-gross play hath well beguiled
The heavy gait of night. Sweet friends, to bed.
A fortnight hold we this solemnity,
In nightly revels and new jollity. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Puck.

Puck. Now the hungry lion roars,
And the wolf behowls the moon;
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,
All with weary task fordone.
Now the wasted brands do glow,
Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud,
Puts the wretch that lies in woe
In remembrance of a shroud.
Now it is the time of night,
That the graves, all gaping wide,
Every one lets forth his sprite,
In the church-way paths to glide:
And we fairies, that do run
By the triple Hecate's team,
From the presence of the sun,
Following darkness like a dream,
Now are frolic: not a mouse
Shall disturb this hallow'd house:
I am sent with broom before,

390. *"behowls";* Theobald's emendation of *"beholds,"* the reading of the Quartos and Folios.—I. G.

To sweep the dust behind the door.

Enter Oberon and Titania with their train.

Obe. Through the house give glimmering light,
By the dead and drowsy fire:
Every elf and fairy sprite
Hop as light as bird from brier;
And this ditty, after me,
Sing, and dance it trippingly.

Tita. First, rehearse your song by rote,
To each word a warbling note:
Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
Will we sing, and bless this place.

[*Song and dance.*

Obe. Now, until the break of day,
Through this house each fairy stray.
To the best bride-bed will we,
Which by us shall blessed be;
And the issue there create
Ever shall be fortunate.
So shall all the couples three
Ever true in loving be;

413. *"this ditty";* Johnson supposes that two songs are lost, one led by Titania, and one by Oberon.—I. G.

422. *"Blessed";* this ceremony was in old times used at all marriages. Mr. Douce has given the formula from the *Manual for the use of Salisbury.* In the French romance of *Melusine,* the Bishop who marries her to Raymondin blesses the nuptial bed. The ceremony is there represented in a very ancient cut. The good prelate is sprinkling the parties with holy water. Sometimes, during the benediction, the married couple only *sat* on the bed; but they generally received a portion of the consecrated bread and wine. It was ordained, in the year 1577, that the ceremony of blessing the nuptial bed should be performed in the daytime, and in the presence of the bride and bridegroom, and of their nearest relations, only.—H. N. H.

And the blots of Nature's hand
Shall not in their issue stand;
Never mole, hare lip, nor scar,
Nor mark prodigious, such as are
Despised in nativity,
Shall upon their children be.
With this field-dew consecrate,
Every fairy take his gait;
And each several chamber bless,
Through this palace, with sweet peace,
Ever shall in safety rest,
And the owner of it blest.
Trip away; make no stay;
Meet me all by break of day.

[*Exeunt Oberon, Titania, and train.*

Puck. If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumber'd here,
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend:
If you pardon, we will mend.
And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unearned luck
Now to scape the serpent's tongue,
We will make amends ere long;
Else the Puck a liar call:
So, good night unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends. [*Exit.*

437, 438. These lines should obviously be transposed in order to make sense of the passage.—I. G.

GLOSSARY

By Israel Gollancz, M.A.

Abridgment, an entertainment to while away the time; V. i. 39.

Aby, pay for; III. ii. 175.

Adamant, loadstone; II. i. 195.

Address'd, ready; V. i. 106.

Admirable, to be wondered at; V. i. 27.

Advised, "be advised"="consider what you are doing"; I. i. 46.

Against, in preparation for; V. i. 75.

Aggravate; Bottom's blunder for "decrease"; I. ii. 87.

All, fully; II. i. 157.

An, if; I. ii. 55.

An if, if; II. ii. 153.

Antique, strange; V. i. 3.

Approve, prove; II. ii. 68.

Apricocks, apricots; III. i. 176.

Argument, subject of story; III. ii. 242.

Artificial, skilled in art; III. ii. 203.

As, that as; I. i. 42.

Ask, require; I. ii. 27.

Aunt, old dame; II. i. 51.

Austerity, strictness of life; I. i. 90.

Barm, froth, yeast; II. i. 38.

Barren, empty headed; III. ii. 13.

Bated, excepted; I. i. 190.

Beard, the prickles on the ears of corn; II. i. 95.

Belike, very likely; I. i. 130.

Bellows-mender, mender of the bellows of organs; I. ii. 45.

Bergomask dance, a rude clownish dance such as the people of the town Bergamo or of the province Bergamasco were wont to practice. "Bergamo, a town in the Venetian territory, capital of the old province Bergamasco, whose inhabitants used to be ridiculed as clownish"; V. i. 370.

Beteem, accord, permit; I. i. 131.

Bill, list; I. ii. 111.

Blood, passion; I. i. 68; I. i. 74; birth, social rank; I. i. 135.

Bolt, arrow; II. i. 165.

Bootless, in vain, uselessly; II. i. 37.

Bosom, heart; I. i. 27.

Bottle, bundle, truss; IV. i. 39.

Bouncing, imperious; II. i. 70.

Brave touch, noble action; III. ii. 70.

Breath, voice, notes; II. i. 151.

Brief, short statement; V. i. 42.

Brisky, brisk; III. i. 102.

Broach'd, stabbed, spitted; V. i. 149.

Bully, comrade; III. i. 8.

Buskin'd, wearing the buskin, a boot with high heels, worn by hunters and huntresses; II. i. 71.

Canker-blossom, the worm that eats into blossoms; III. ii. 282.

Cankers, worms; II. ii. 3.

Capacity, "to my c." *i. e.* "so far as I am able to understand"; V. i. 105.

Cavalery, cavalero, cavalier; IV. i. 26.

Centaurs; "battle with the c." an allusion to the attack made on Hercules by the Centaurs when he was in pursuit of the Erymanthian boar; the battle referred to is not their famous contest with the Lapithæ; V. i. 44.

Chance; "how c." *i. e.* "how chances it"; I. i. 129.

Changeling, a child substituted by the fairies for the one stolen by them; II. i. 23.

Cheek by jole, *i. e.* cheek to cheek, side by side; III. ii. 338.

Cheer, countenance; III. ii. 96; V. i. 308.

Chiding, barking; IV. i. 124.

Childing, productive, fertile; II. i. 112.

Church-way, leading to the church; V. i. 400.

Churl, boor, peasant; II. ii. 78.

Clerk, scholars; V. i. 93.

Coil, confusion, ado; III. ii. 339.

Collied, dark, black; I. i. 145.

Compact, composed, formed; V. i. 8.

Compare with, try to rival; II. ii. 99.

Con, learn by heart; I. ii. 106.

Concern, accord with, befit; I. i. 60.

Condole, probably one of Bottom's blunders, unless perhaps used in the sense of lament; I. ii. 30.

Confusion, ruin; I. i. 149.

Consecrate, consecrated; V. i. 433.

Constancy, consistency; V. i. 26.

Contagious, pestilential; II. i. 90.

Continents, banks; II. i. 92.

Courageous, happy, fortunate; IV. ii. 28.

Coy, fondle; IV. i. 2.

Crazed; "c. title," *i. e.* "a title with a flaw in it"; I. i. 92.

Create, created; V. i. 423.

Critical, censorious; V. i. 54.

Cry, pack of hounds; IV. i. 133.

Cupid's flower, the pansy, "love-in-idleness"; IV. i. 81.

Curst, shrewish; III. ii. 300.

Cut thread and thrum, = cut everything, good and bad (vide Thread and Thrum); V. i. 297.

Dances and delight = delightful dances; II. i. 254.

Darkling, in the dark; II. ii. 86.

Dead, deadly, death-like; III. ii. 57.

Dear; "dear expense," a privilege dearly bought; I. i. 249.

Debate, contention; II. i. 116.

Defeated, cheated; IV. i. 167.

Defect, Bottom's blunder for "effect"; III. i. 42.

Derived; "as well derived," as well-born; I. i. 99.

Devices, plans, projects; I. ii. 107; performance; V. i. 50.

Dewberries, the fruit of the dewberry bush; III. i. 176.

Dewlap, the loose skin hanging from the throat of cattle; here used for "neck"; II. i. 50; dewlapp'd; IV. i. 131.

Dian's bud, probably the bud of the Agnus Castus or Chaste-tree; "the vertue of this herbe

is that he wyll kepe man and woman chaste"; IV. i. 81.

Discharge, perform; I. ii. 98; IV. ii. 8.

Disfigure, to obliterate; I. i. 51.

Disfigure, Quince's blunder for "figure"; III. i. 66.

Distemperature, disorder of the elements; II. i. 106.

Dole, grief; V. i. 289.

Done; "when all is done,"= when all is said and done; III. i. 16.

Dowager, a widow with a jointure; I. i. 5.

Drawn, with drawn sword; III. ii. 402.

Earthlier; "earthlier happy," happier as regards this world; I. i. 76.

Eat, ate; II. ii. 149.

Eglantine, sweetbriar; II. i. 252.

Egypt; "brow of E."= the brow of a gypsy (*i. e.* an Egyptian); V. i. 11.

Eight and six, alternate verses of four and three feet; the common ballad meter of the time; III. i. 27.

Embarked traders, traders embarked upon the sea; II. i. 127.

Enforced, forced, violated; III. i. 212.

Enough; "you have enough," *i. e.* you have heard enough to convict him; IV. i. 164.

Ercles = Hercules, whose twelve labors had often formed the subject of dramatic shows, the hero resembling Herod in his ranting; I. ii. 32.

Erewhile, a little while ago; III. ii. 274.

Estate unto, bestow upon; I. i. 98.

Ever, always; I. i. 150.

Exposition; Bottom's blunder for "disposition"; IV. i. 45.

Extenuate, mitigate, relax; I. i. 120.

Faint, pale; I. i. 215.

Fair, fairness, beauty; I. i. 182.

Fair, kindly; II. i. 199.

Fall, let fall, drop; V. i. 144.

Fancy, love; I. i. 155; IV. i. 173.

Fancy-free, free from the power of love; II. i. 164.

Fancy-sick, sick for love; III. ii. 96.

Favor, features; I. i. 186.

Favors, love-tokens; II. i. 12; nosegays of flowers; IV. i. 57.

Fell; "passing fell," extremely angry; II. i. 20.

Fellow, match, equal; IV. i. 40.

Figure, typify; I. i. 237.

Fire, will of the wisp; III. i. 117.

Flew'd, having an overhanging lip on the upper jaw; IV. i. 128.

Floods, waters; II. i. 103.

Flout, mock at; II. ii. 128.

Fond, foolish; II. ii. 88.

For, "for the candle," *i. e.* "because of"; V. i. 257.

Force, "of force"= perforce; III. ii. 40.

Fordone, exhausted; V. i. 392.

Forgeries, idle inventions; II. i. 81.

Forth, out of, from; I. i. 164.

For that, because; II. i. 220.

Forty, used as an indefinite number; II. i. 176.

French crown color, light yellow, the color of the gold of the French crown; I. ii. 100.

Gallant = "gallantly" (which the Folios read); I. ii. 25.

Gawds, trifles, trinkets; I. i. 33.
Generally, Bottom's blunder for "severally"; I. ii. 2.
Glance at, hint at; II. i. 75.
Gleek, jest, scoff; III. i. 157.
Go about, attempt; IV. i. 221.
Gossip's bowl, originally a christening cup; thence applied to a drink usually prepared for christening feasts; its ingredients were ale, spice, sugar, and roasted *crabs* (*i. e.* crab-apples); II. i. 47.
Government, control; "in government" = under control; V. i. 125.
Grace, favor granted; II. ii. 89.
Grim-look'd, grim-looking; V. i. 172.
Grow; "grow to a point," come to the point; I. ii. 10.

Hands, "give me your hands," applaud by clapping; V. i. 455.
Head; "to his head" = to his face; I. i. 106.
Hearts, good fellows; IV. ii. 27.
Helen, a blunder for "Hero"; V. i. 200.
Hempen home-spuns, coarse fellows (rude mechanicals); III. i. 84.
Henchman, page, attendant; II. i. 121.
Hight, is called; V. i. 141.
Horned moon, used perhaps quibblingly with reference to the material of Moonshine's lanthorn; V. i. 245.
Human, humane, courteous; II. ii. 57.
Human mortals, men as distinguished from fairies, who were considered *mortal*, though not *human;* II. i. 101.

Imbrue, stain with blood; V. i. 360.
Immediately, purposely; I. i. 45.
Impeach, bring into question; II. i. 214.
In = on; II. i. 85.
Incorporate, made one body; III. ii. 208.
Injurious, insulting; III. ii. 195.
Intend, pretend; III. ii. 333.
Interchained, bound together; II. ii. 49.

Juvenal, juvenile, youth; III. i. 102.

Kind; "in this kind," in this respect; I. i. 54.
Knacks = knick-knacks; I. i. 34.
Knot-grass; "hindering k." was formerly believed to have the power of checking the growth of children; III. ii. 329.

Lakin; by 'r lakin, *i. e.* by our ladykin, or little lady, *i. e.* the Virgin Mary; III. i. 14.
Latch'd, moistened, anointed; III. ii. 36.
Leave, give up; II. i. 197.
Leviathan, whale; II. i. 174.
Limander, a blunder for "Leander"; V. i. 200.
Lion-fell, lion's skin (but *cp.* Note); V. i. 229.
Lob, buffoon, clown; II. i. 16.
Lode-star, the leading star, the polar star; I. i. 183.
Lordship; "unto his lordship, whose," etc., = unto the government of him to whose, etc.; I. i. 81.
Lose, forget; I. i. 114.
Love-in-idleness, the heartsease, or pansy, called "Cupid's flower"; II. i. 168.

Loves; "of all loves," for love's sake; II. ii. 154.

Luscious, delicious, sweet; II. i. 251.

Make mouths upon = "make face at, mock at"; III. ii. 238.

May, can; V. i. 2.

Mazed, perplexed; II. i. 113.

Mazes, "figures marked out on village greens for rustic sports, such as the game called *running the figure of eight*"; II. i. 99.

Means, moans; V. i. 339.

Mechanicals, working-men; III. ii. 9.

Mimic, actor; III. ii. 19.

Minding, intending; V. i. 113.

Minimus, tiny creature; III. ii. 329.

Misgraffed, grafted on a wrong tree; I. i. 137.

Misprised, mistaken; III. ii. 74.

Misprision, mistake; III. ii. 90.

Momentany, momentary, lasting a moment; I. i. 143.

Morning's love, *i. e.* Cephalus; III. ii. 389.

Moused, torn in pieces, as a cat worries a mouse; V. i. 280.

Mouth, sound; IV. i. 132.

Murrion = infected with murrain, a disease among cattle; II. i. 97.

Musk-rose, described in Gerarde's *Herbal* as "a flower of a white colour," with "certaine yellow seedes in the middle . . . of most writers reckoned among the wilde Roses"; II. i. 252.

Naught; "a thing of naught," a worthless thing; IV. ii. 14.

Neaf, fist; IV. i. 21.

Nearly; "nearly that concerns" = that nearly c.; I. i. 126.

Neeze = sneeze; II. i. 56.

Next, nearest, first; III. ii. 2.

Night-rule, night revel; III. ii. 5.

Nine men's morris, "a plat of green turf cut into a sort of chess board, for the rustic youth to exercise their skill upon. The game was called 'nine men's morris' (or 'merrils,' *i. e.* 'counters' or 'pawns') because the players had each nine men which they moved along the lines cut in the ground—a diagram of three squares, one within the other—until one side had taken or penned up all those on the other"; II. i. 98.

Ninus, the supposed founder of Nineveh, the husband of Semiramis, Queen of Babylon; V. i. 140.

Nole, noddle, head; III. ii. 17.

None; "I will none," *i. e.* "nothing to do with her, none of her"; III. ii. 169.

Obscenely; Bottom's blunder for (?) seemly; I. ii. 115.

Observance, "to do o. to a morn of May," *i. e.* "to observe the rights of May-day"; I. i. 167.

Observation = observance of May-day; IV. i. 113.

Of, by, II. ii. 134; for, III. i. 47.

On, "fond on," *i. e.* "doting on"; II. i. 266.

On = of; V. i. 231.

Orange-tawny, dark yellow; I. ii. 99.

Orbs, rings of rich green grass thought to be caused by the fairies; II. i. 9.

ORIGINAL = originators; II. i. 117.
OTHER, others; IV. i. 74.
OUNCE, a kind of lynx; II. ii. 30.
OUSEL, blackbird; III. i. 135.
OVERBEAR, overrule; IV. i. 189.
OWE, own; II. ii. 79.
OXLIPS, a kind of cowslip not often found wild; II. i. 250.

PAGEANT, show, exhibition; III. ii. 114.
PALPABLE-GROSS, palpably gross; V. i. 385.
PARD = leopard; II. ii. 31.
PARLOUS = perilous; III. i. 14.
PARTS, qualities; III. ii. 153.
PAT, PAT, exactly, just as it should be; III. i. 2.
PATCHED, wearing a coat of various colors; "patched fool," *i. e.* "a motley fool"; IV. i. 224.
PATCHES, clowns; III. ii. 9.
PATENT; "virgin patent," privilege of virginity; I. i. 80.
PELTING, paltry; II. i. 91.
PENSIONERS, retainers; II. i. 10.
PERIODS, full stops; V. i. 96.
PERT, lively; I. i. 13.
PHIBBUS = Phœbus; I. ii. 38.
PILGRIMAGE; "maiden pilgrimage," a passing through life unwedded; I. i. 75.
PLAIN-SONG, used as an epithet of the cuckoo, with reference to its simple, monotonous note; a "plain-song" is a melody without any variations; III. i. 141.
POINTS; "stand upon points," used quibblingly (1) "mind his stops," and (2) "be overscrupulous"; V. i. 118.
POSSESS'D; "as well possess'd," possessed of as much wealth; I. i. 100.
PREFERRED, submitted for approval; IV. ii. 41.
PREPOSTEROUSLY, perversely; III. ii. 121.
PRESENTLY = immediately; IV. ii. 39.
PREVAILMENT, weight, sway; I. i. 35.
PREY, the act of preying; II. ii. 150.
PRINCESS, paragon, perfection; III. ii. 144.
PRIVILEGE, safeguard, protection; II. i. 220.
PROCRUS, a blunder for "Procris," the wife of Cephalus; V. i. 202.
PRODIGIOUS, unnatural; V. i. 430.
PROLOGUE, speaker of the prologue; V. i. 106.
PROPER, fine, handsome; I. ii. 91.
PROPERTIES; a theatrical term for all the adjuncts of a play, except the scenery and the dresses of the actors; I. ii. 111.
PROTEST, vow; I. i. 89.
PUMPS, low shoes; IV. ii. 39.
PURPLE-IN-GRAIN, dyed deep red; I. ii. 100.

QUAIL, quell, overpower; V. i. 298.
QUELL, kill; V. i. 298.
QUERN, a mill for grinding corn by hand; II. i. 36.
QUESTIONS, arguing; II. i. 235.

RECORDER, a kind of flageolet; V. i. 124.
RENT, rend; III. ii. 215.
RERE-MICE, bats; II. ii. 4.
RESPECT; "in my r.," *i. e.* "in my estimation"; II. i. 224.
RESPECTS, regards; I. i. 160.
RIGHT MAID, true maid; III. ii. 302.

Ringlets, the circles on the greensward, supposed to be made by the fairies (*cp.* Orbs); II. i. 86.
Ripe, grow ripe; II. ii. 118.
Ripe, ready for presentation; V. i. 42.
Round, a dance in a circle; II. i. 140.
Roundel, dance in a circle; II. ii. 1.
Run through fire; a proverbial expression signifying "to do impossibilities"; II. ii. 103.

Sad, serious; IV. i. 104.
Sanded, sandy colored; IV. i. 129.
Savors, scents, fragrance; II. i. 13.
Schooling, instructions; I. i. 116.
Scrip, "scroll," *i. e.* list of actors; I. ii. 3.
Seal, pledge; III. ii. 144.
Seething, heated, excited; V. i. 4.
Self-affairs, my own business; I. i. 113.
Sensible, capable of feeling; V. i. 184.
Serpent's tongue, *i. e.* hissing, as a sign of disapproval; V. i. 451.
Shafalus, a blunder for "Cephalus," who remained true to his wife Procris notwithstanding Aurora's love for him; V. i. 202, 203.
Sheen, brightness; II. i. 29.
Shore = shorn; V. i. 356.
Shrewd, mischievous; II. i. 33.
Simpleness, simplicity; V. i. 83.
Sinister, left; V. i. 165.
Sisters three, *i. e.* the Fates; V. i. 352.
Sleep, sleeping; IV. i. 157.
Small, in a treble voice like a boy or a woman; I. ii. 53.
Snuff, used equivocally; "to be in snuff" = "to be offended"; V. i. 258.
So, in the same manner; IV. i. 129.
Solemnities, nuptial festivities; I. i. 11.
Solemnly, with due ceremony; IV. i. 97.
Sooth, truth; II. ii. 129.
Sort, company, crew; III. ii. 13.
Sorting; "not s. with," not befitting; V. i. 55.
Sphery, star-like; II. ii. 99.
Spleen, sudden passion; I. i. 146.
Split, "to make all split," a proverbial expression used to denote violent action; originally used by sailors; I. ii. 33.
Spotted, polluted; I. i. 110.
Spring; "middle summer's spring," the beginning of midsummer; II. i. 82.
Square, wrangle, squabble; II. i. 30.
Stay = to stay; II. i. 138.
Stealth, stealing away; III. ii. 310.
Steppe (so Quarto 1), probably an error for "steep" (the reading of the Folios and Quarto 2); hence Milton's "Indian steep" (*Comus*, 139); it is doubtful whether Shakespeare was acquainted with this Russian term; II. i. 69.
Still, always, ever; I. i. 212.
Stood upon, depended upon; I. i. 139.
Streak, touch softly; II. i. 257.
Stretch'd, strained; "extremely s." *i. e.* "strained to the utmost"; V. i. 80.

STRINGS, to tie on false beards with; IV. ii. 37.

SUPERPRAISE, overpraise; III. ii. 153.

TARTAR'S BOW; the Tartars or Parthians were famous for their skill in archery; in the old maps Tartary included the ancient Parthia; III. ii. 101.

TEAR; "to tear a cat in," a proverbial phrase = to rant violently; I. ii. 32.

THICK-SKIN, dolt; III. ii. 13.

THRACIAN SINGER, *i. e.* Orpheus; "His grief for the loss of Eurydice led him to treat with contempt the Thracian women, who in revenge tore him to pieces under the excitement of their Bacchanalian orgies"; V. i. 49.

THREAD, the warp; V. i. 297.

THROWS, throws off, sheds; II. i. 255.

THRUM, the loose end of a weaver's warp; V. i. 297.

'TIDE, betide; V. i. 207.

TIRING-HOUSE, dressing-room; III. i. 5.

TOWARD, in progress; III. i. 86.

TOYS, trifles; "fairy toys," fanciful tales; V. i. 3.

TRACE, traverse; II. i. 25.

TRANSLATED, transformed; I. i. 191; III. i. 127.

TRANSPORTED, removed, carried off; IV. ii. 4.

TRIPLE HECATE, *i. e.* ruling in three capacities—as Luna or Cynthia in heaven, Diana on earth, and Hecate in hell; V. i. 402.

TRIUMPH, public show; I. i. 19.

TROTH, truth; II. ii. 36.

TUNEABLE, tuneful; I. i. 184.

UNBREATHED, unexercised; V. i. 74.

UNHARDEN'D, impressionable; I. i. 35.

UPON, by; II. i. 244.

VANTAGE; "with vantage," having the advantage; I. i. 102.

VAWARD = vanguard; IV. i. 110.

VILLAGERY, a collective word, meaning either (1) village population, or (2) villages; II. i. 35.

VIRTUE; "fair virtue's force," *i. e.* the power of thy fairness; III. i. 150.

VOICE, approval; I. i. 54.

VOTARESS, a vestal vowed to virginity; II. i. 163.

WANDERING KNIGHT = knight errant; I. ii. 48.

WANT, lack; II. i. 101.

WANTON, luxuriant, thick; II. .. 99.

WASTED, consumed; V. i. 393.

WAYS; "all ways," in all directions; IV. i. 48.

WEED, robe; II. i. 256.

WHERE (dissyllabic); II. i. 249.

WHERE = wherever; IV. i. 162.

WHETHER (monosyllabic); I. i. 69.

WITHERING OUT, delaying the enjoyment of; I. i. 6.

WITHOUT, outside of; I. i. 165; beyond the reach of; IV. i. 163.

WODE, mad (with a play upon "wood"); II. i. 192.

WOODBINE, honeysuckle; II. i. 251; probably convolvulus or bindweed; IV. i. 50.

WORM, serpent; III. ii. 71.

WRATH, wrathful; II. i. 20.

YOU (ethic dative); I. ii. 87, 89.

STUDY QUESTIONS

By Anne Throop Craig

GENERAL

1. What are suppositions concerning the occasion for which the play was originally written?

2. With what especial group of plays do the characteristics of this play lead us to connect it?

3. What are the probable sources of the framework of the play?

4. What are the sources of Shakespeare's fairy mythology?

5. What, especially, are the characteristics of Puck, and what their derivation?

6. What may have suggested to Shakespeare the subject of his burlesque interlude?

7. What explanations have been advanced of the meaning of "Oberon's Vision"?

8. What perhaps suggested the idea of a "dream-drama" to Shakespeare?

9. To what medieval form is his employment of the Dream akin?

10. What internal evidences of mature work do some passages of the play bear?

11. What constitute the essential life and merit of the play? Describe at length. Does the execution accord with the plan?

12. Is the characterization striking? In what instances? What distinguishes the treatment of the fairy element?

ACT I

13. Where does the play open?
14. What marriage is to take place?
15. What was the plaint of Egeus? Whom did he want his daughter to marry?
16. Whom did Hermia love?
17. Who loved Demetrius?
18. What plan do Hermia and Lysander make? What dramatic purpose does their plan serve?
19. Describe scene ii. What is distinctive about the characters?

ACT II

20. What is striking about the fairy's lyrics?
21. What is meant by "orbs" in line 9, scene i?
22. What were the folk-beliefs about Robin Goodfellow as suggested in the fairy's description, scene i?
23. What was the quarrel between Titania and Oberon?
24. What is meant by "nine men's morris" in line 108, scene i?
25. What is Oberon's plot against Titania?
26. How does he plan to right the loves of Helen and Demetrius?
27. What does Puck do?
28. Describe the fairy opening of scene ii?
29. What happens when Lysander awakes? What is the effect upon Hermia?

ACT III

30. Describe the rehearsal in scene i. Is it suggestive of theatrical performances in Shakespeare's time?
31. What is to be supposed really befell Bottom while away from his companions in the hawthorn-brake "tiring house"?
32. What happens to Titania when she awakes?
33. Describe the comedy elements in the scenes between Titania and Bottom, and the fairies.

34. How does the mistake of Puck tangle the affairs of the Athenian lovers?

35. How is Puck's nature shown by the way he takes the situation made by his mistake?

36. How does Helena interpret the protestations of love, when they are directed to her?

37. What characterizes the quarrel between Hermia and Helena?

38. How does Oberon direct Puck to resolve the difficulties of the lovers?

ACT IV

39. How does Oberon begin to feel about the plight of Titania? What does he do about it?

40. What element do Theseus and Hippolyta bring into the scene? What is the scenic impression of their entry with their train? What does its dramatic contrast to the fairy scene,—just past,—serve?

41. How does the awaking of the lovers, and of Bottom, emphasize the effect of the previous incident of the entry of Theseus and his retinue?

42. What is the feature of Bottom's soliloquy when he awakens?

43. What marks the breaking of the dream atmosphere?

44. What points in the meeting of Bottom with his friends after the night in the woods, emphasize his experience as having been a dream? Compare it with the scene of their flight from the woods before. What in that previous scene was the turning point from the actual to the incidents of Bottom's dream?

ACT V

45. How does Theseus explain the illusions of the night?

46. What poetic and ethical meaning is in Hippolyta's reply? Of what is this characteristic in Shakespeare's expression?

47. Why did Theseus decide to choose the "mechanicals" play? How is this characteristic of Shakespeare's portrayal of human feeling?

48. Describe the giving of the play. Bottom's rendering of the Prologue.

49. Describe the attitude of different members of the audience throughout the enactment. How does it distinguish them severally? From what point of view do they witness the play?

50. How is the plot resolved? What effect is attained by having the fairy element carry the end?

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